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ABSTRACT

An introduction to Canada Natives briefly identifies the seven different culture areas which existed in Canada before the white man came, and the Indian tribes who lived in those areas. The booklet then gives more extensive description of the history and culture of the Huron (farmers of the Eastern Woodlands), the Blackfoot (Plains), the Ojibwa (hunters of the Eastern Woodlands), the Haida (Pacific Coast), and the Inuit (the Arctic). In another chapter, changes that came about as a result of Indian contact with white men are outlined. The next section describes the history and culture of the Metis (descendents of both Indians and Europeans). The final section discusses contemporary issues, including environmental protection, the Native way of life, differences in government provisions for the three groups of Canada Natives (status Indians, Metis and non-status Indians, and the Inuit), poverty, and opportunities for employment. (CM)

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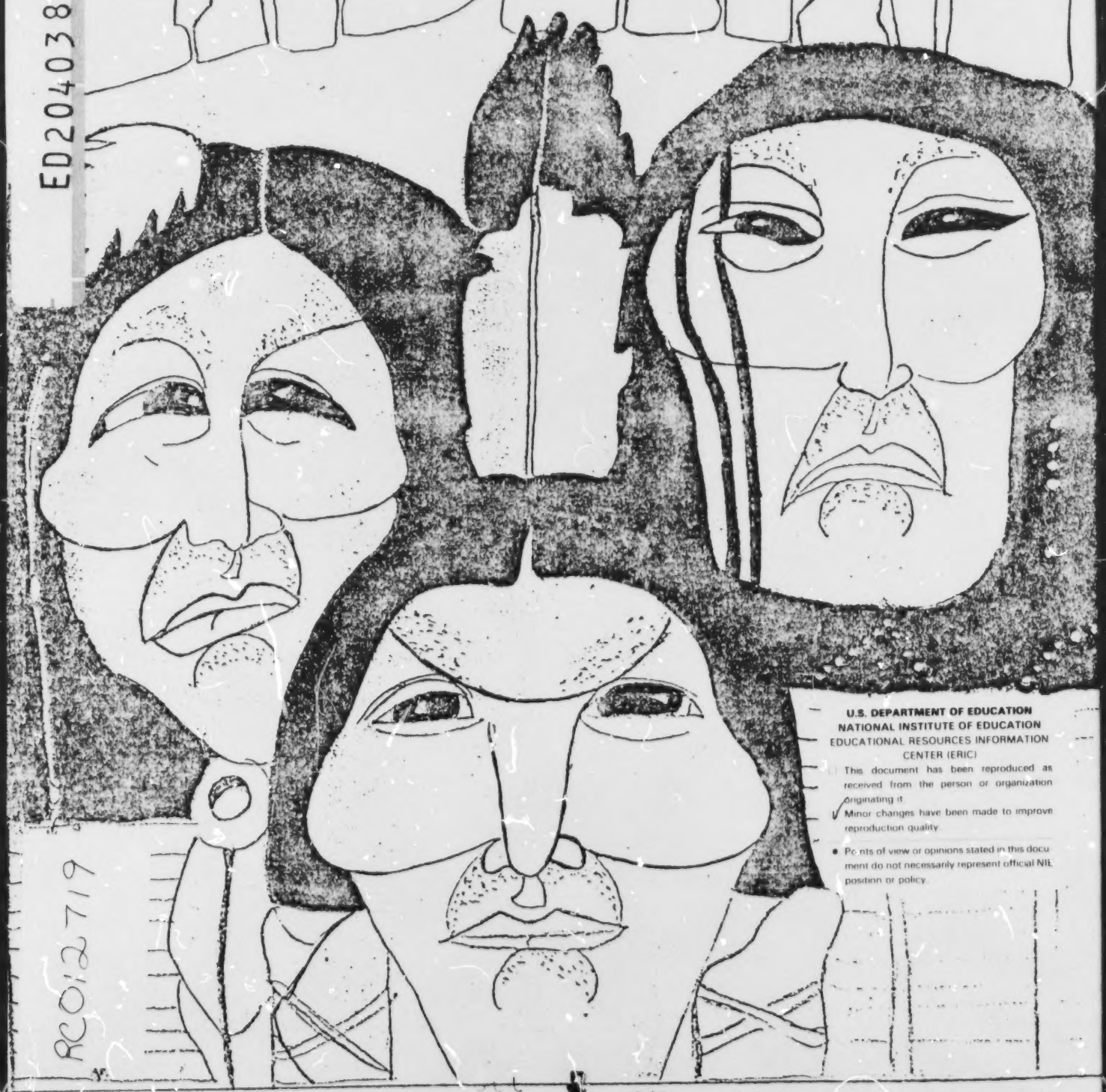
INDIANS



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INDIANS

AN INTRODUCTION TO CANADA'S NATIVE PEOPLE

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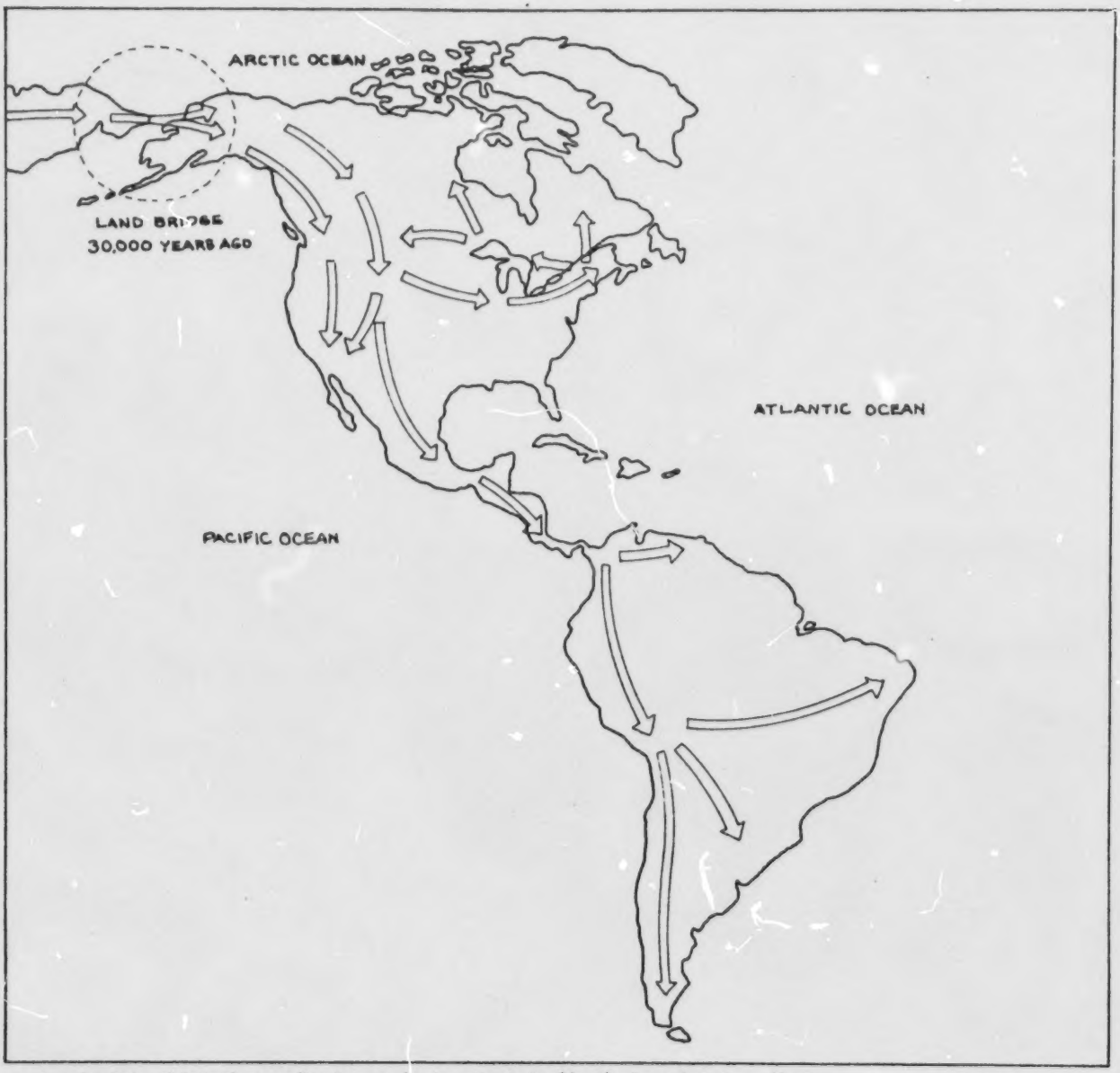
Before the white man...

The big-horned bison, ancestor to the buffalo, was one of the animals hunted by Indians thousands of years ago.

Picture this. Once, long ago, there was a bridge between Siberia and America. If you look on a map of the world, you can see where the bridge would have been. It went from the easternmost tip of Siberia to the westernmost tip of Alaska. It was dry land.

The land bridge existed during the ice age, when much of the water in the oceans froze solid, leaving it high and dry.

Archaeologists, who study the origins of man, think the Indians of today



Archeologists think the earliest people to come to North America travelled across a land bridge from Siberia. Then, they gradually spread throughout the continent, as the map shows.

came across this land bridge from Siberia many thousands of years ago.

That doesn't mean that the people in Siberia got up all of a sudden and decided to move to North America. They didn't even know the land bridge connected two entire continents!

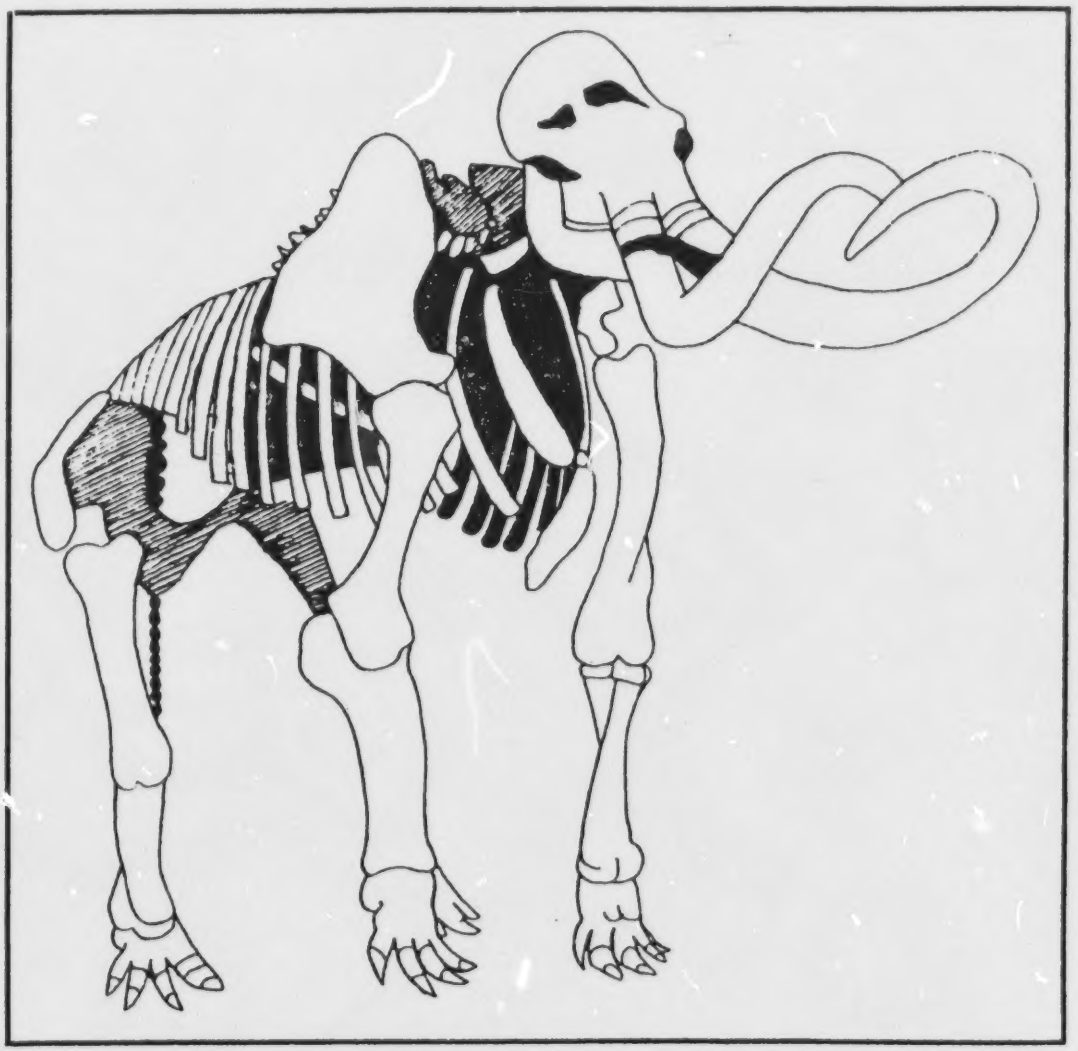
They just followed the animals across the bridge. They were a nomadic people, a people that lived by constantly moving and following the game that supplied them with food, skins for clothing and shelter, and many other needs. As they kept following the animals, they gradually moved into North America.

As time passed, they moved farther into the new continent, as the animals moved south in search of new grazing lands. Slowly, the entire continent came to be populated.

Archaeologists think the Indians got here a long, long time ago. In fact,

they have found signs of people in North America from 12,000 years ago. The white man has only been in North America for about 350 years. So the Indians were by far the first people to live in North America.

How did the Indian people live such a long time ago? For the most part, they hunted game, on the plains. In those days, the plains were not as dry as they are now. They were rich lands of grass and trees. And large herds of big animals lived on them. There were mammoths, the huge, long-haired ancestors of the elephant; and there were big-horned bisons, forerunners of the buffalo. The Indians hunted these animals with knife-sharp spears, which they chipped from flint. Today, archaeologists still find the bones of the animals the Indians hunted with the spear points inside them.



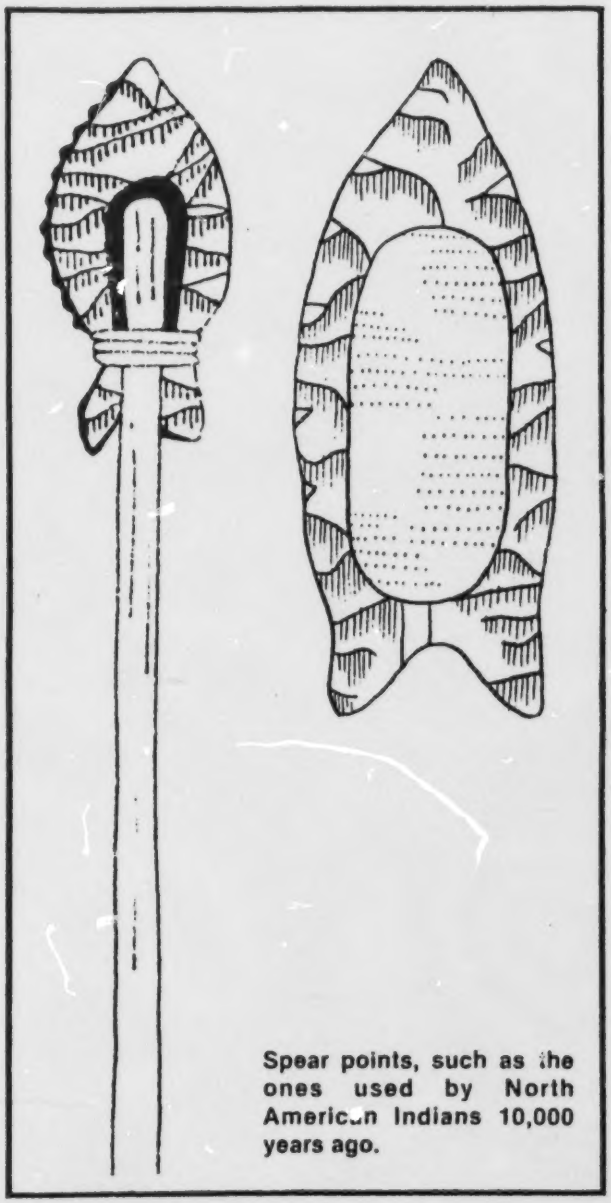
The wooly mammoth.

About 8,000 BC, though, the climate began to change. The ice covering Canada began to melt. The oceans rose, covering the land bridge from Siberia to North America. The plains became warmer, and drier. The lakes and rivers gradually dried up. The plant life died. And the animals began to disappear, too.

By 5,500 BC, the mammoth, the big-horned bison, the horse, the camel and the armadillo were all extinct in North America. The only big animal left on the plains was the modern-day bison, or buffalo.

When they moved into North America, the Indians had followed the game, moving through the continent, fol-

lowing the big animals. Many lived on the plains, where the game was. But now that most of the large wild life was gone, they had to learn to hunt smaller animals, how to fish, and how to gather wild plants for food. So they moved again, spreading throughout the continent, adapting their way of life to the land and its resources.



Spear points, such as the ones used by North American Indians 10,000 years ago.

Where the Indians Went

The Indians had spread throughout North America. They now lived in seven different areas. Each area had its own special customs; its own culture. That's why we call the various places the Indians moved to "culture areas."

A "culture area" is a place where all the Indian tribes lived in a similar way. For instance, all the tribes that lived by the sea and fished for food are in one culture area. All the tribes that lived on the plains and hunted for buffalo are in another culture area. Usually, there were several different tribes in a culture area. Each one had a different language, religion, way of dressing and so on. We must remember that, although we place them in a culture area according to their similarities, there were also many differences between the tribes in a culture area.

Before the white man came, there were seven different culture areas.

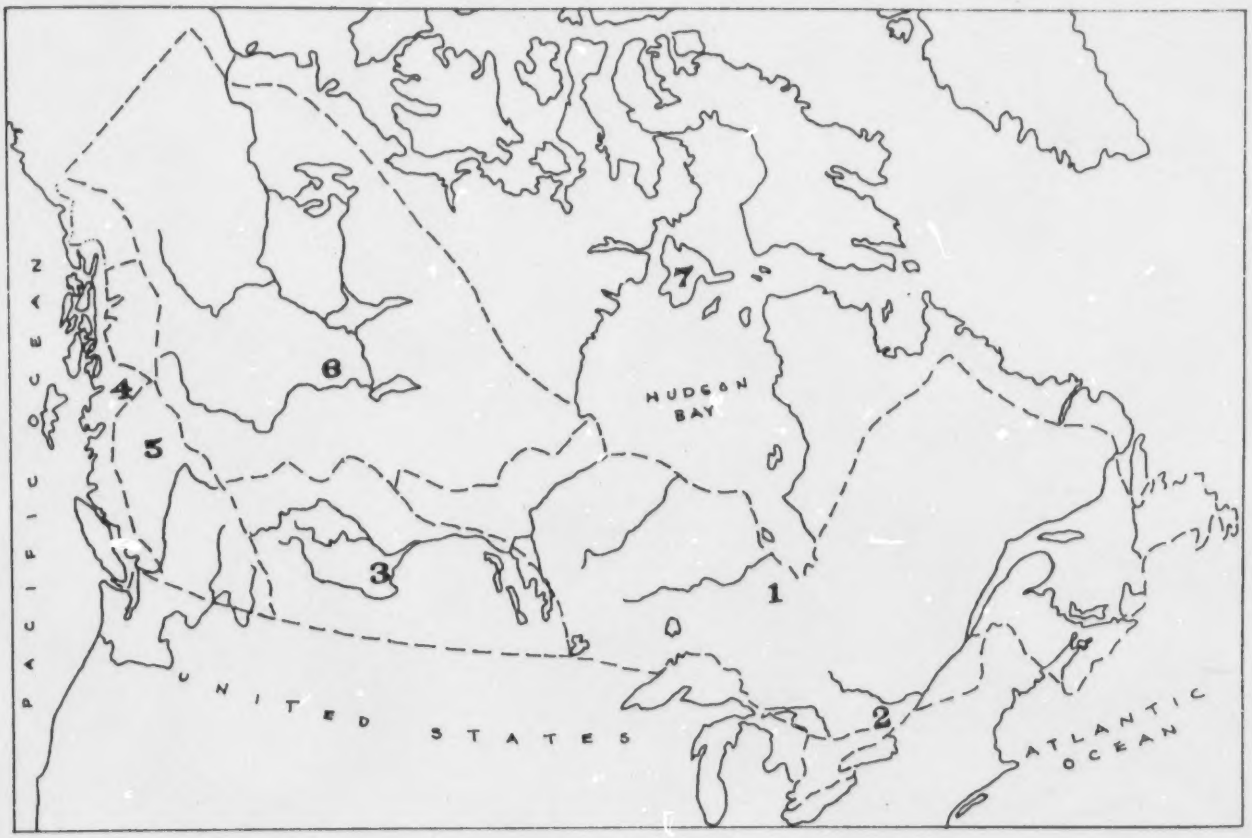
The first culture area is called the *Eastern Woodlands*. It covered the whole of eastern Canada, from the Maritimes to Manitoba. The land was covered with huge forests, and thousands of lakes and rivers.

The people lived by fishing and hunting. They hunted moose, deer, bear, rabbit, porcupine and beaver. They gathered wild plants. And they made sugar from Maple trees.

The people of the Eastern Woodlands moved around all the time. They did that because the animals, fish and plants were found at different places during different times of the year. So they had to have houses that they could easily move with them. They developed some ingenious methods of transportation, too: canoes, snowshoes and toboggans, for instance, were all invented by the Indian people of the Eastern Woodlands.

There were seven tribes in the Eastern Woodlands. Their names were the Beothuk, Micmac, Malecite, Montaignais, Naskapi, Algonkin, Ojibwa and Cree.

The second culture area is found right inside the first one, and we call the people who lived there the *farmers of the Eastern Woodlands*. These people had a



The map shows the different culture areas where the Indians and Inuit lived.

different way of life. They did not move with the animals all the time.

They were farmers. They cleared the forests to grow such crops as corn, beans, squash and tobacco. These farming people lived in what is now Southeastern Ontario. There were four tribes; the Huron, Tobacco Huron, Neutral Indians and the Iroquois.

The third culture area is *the Plains,* the southern areas of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The plains were rolling grassland, which made ideal grazing area. The plains, therefore, could support huge herds of buffalo. The people of the Plains lived by hunting buffalo. So they, too, were constantly on the move. They lived in tipis of skin, which were easily carried. They used dogs, and later, horses, to help them move their household goods. The Plains people included the Assiniboine, Plains Cree, Blackfoot, Scarcee, Gros-Ventre and Sioux tribes.

The fourth culture area is the *Plateau*, the area covered by the Rocky Mountains. This country was mountainous, with deep, heavily-wooded valleys, through which fast-flowing rivers ran. The people fished for salmon in the rivers, and hunted mountain goats, sheep and caribou. The tribes of the Plateau included the Interior Salish, Kootenay, Chilcotin, Carrier, Tsetsaut, Tahltan and Tagish.

The fifth culture area is the *Pacific Coast*, the area west of the Rocky Mountains. The people of the Pacific Coast lived at the mouths of the rivers, and on the islands off the shore. They fished for salmon in the rivers, collected shellfish and hunted sea-mammals in the ocean. They lived in permanent villages, in large houses built of cedar, and had highly developed forms of art based mainly on carving in wood. The tribes of the Pacific Coast were the Tlinkit, Haida, Tsimshian, Bella Coola, Kwatkiutl, Nootka and Coast Salish.

The sixth culture area is the *Mackenzie and Yukon River Basins*. This area is in the far north, and the people lived in the forests right at the edge of the treeline. They fished, gathered roots and berries, and hunted moose, caribou and hare. Sometimes, they ventured out onto the open plains of the Arctic, although they preferred to stay in the forest. The tribes of the Mackenzie and Yukon River Basins included the Sekani, Chipewyan, Yellowknife, Slave, Dogrib, Hare, Nahanni and Kutchin.

The seventh culture area is the *Arctic*. This area includes the whole of Canada north of the treeline. It stretches from Labrador in the east to the Yukon in the west.

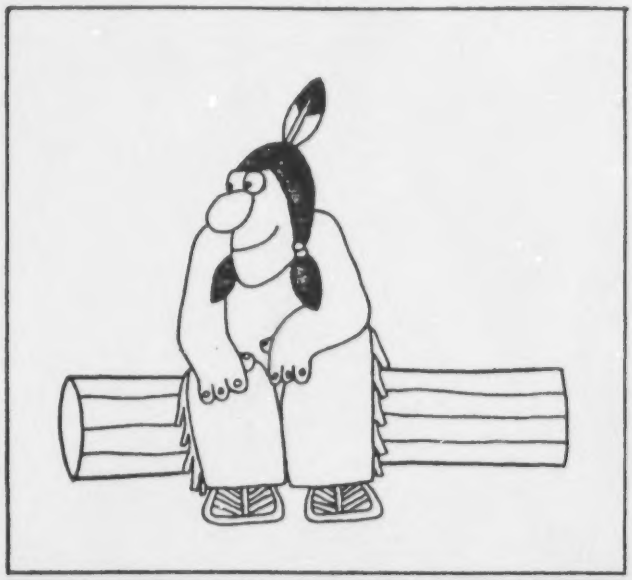
The people in the Arctic region are called the Inuit. They are sometimes called "Eskimos," although they prefer to use "Inuit," which means "the people."

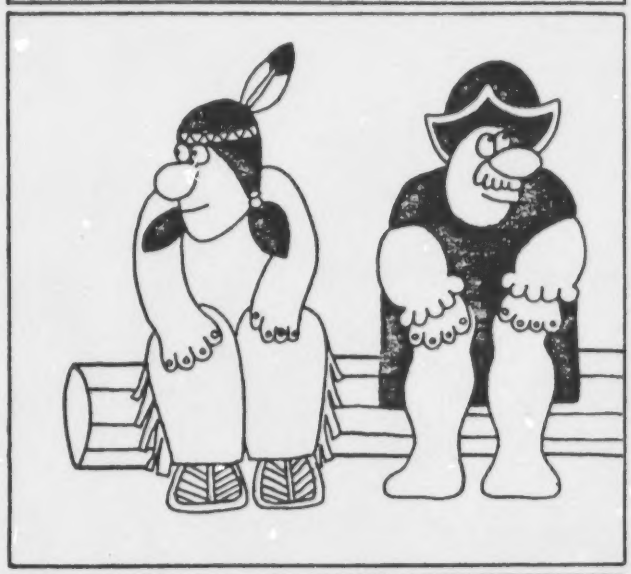
Most of the Inuit lived along the sea coasts. They hunted sea-mammals, such as seals, whales and walruses, with great skill. In the summer, they moved farther inland and hunted caribou. The people of the Arctic were known for their advanced technology. They carved a wide range of tools from wood, bone and stone.

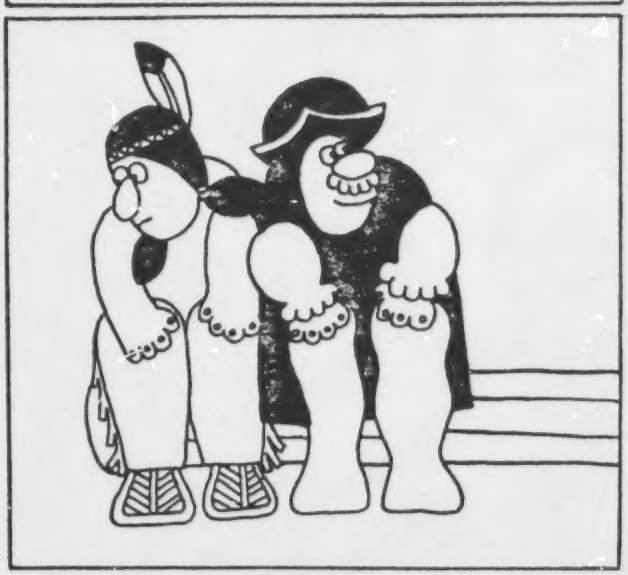
Each Indian tribe in Canada may be placed in one of the seven culture areas, according to the things it shared with other tribes of the culture area.

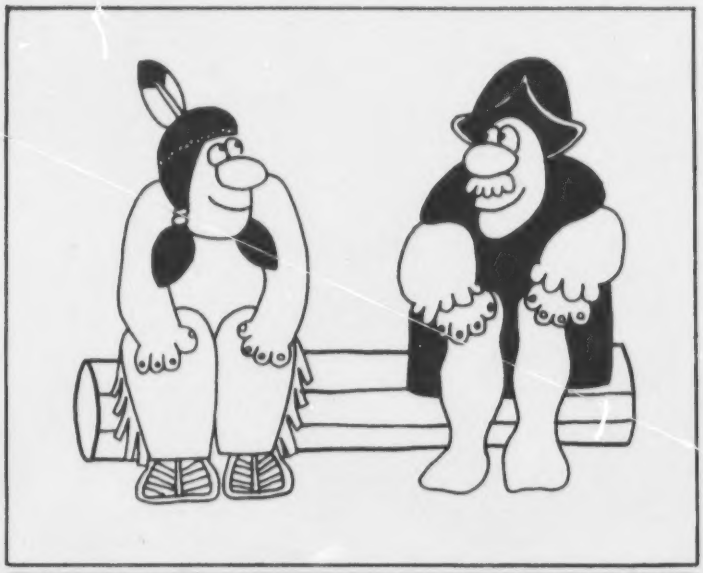
Language is different, though. In some culture areas, different tribes spoke completely different languages. In other cases, one language might be spoken in several different culture areas. The Algonkian language, for instance, was spoken in the Eastern Woodlands as well as on the Plains. Two languages, Algonkian and Athapaskan, were spoken across nine tenths of Canada (excluding the Arctic).

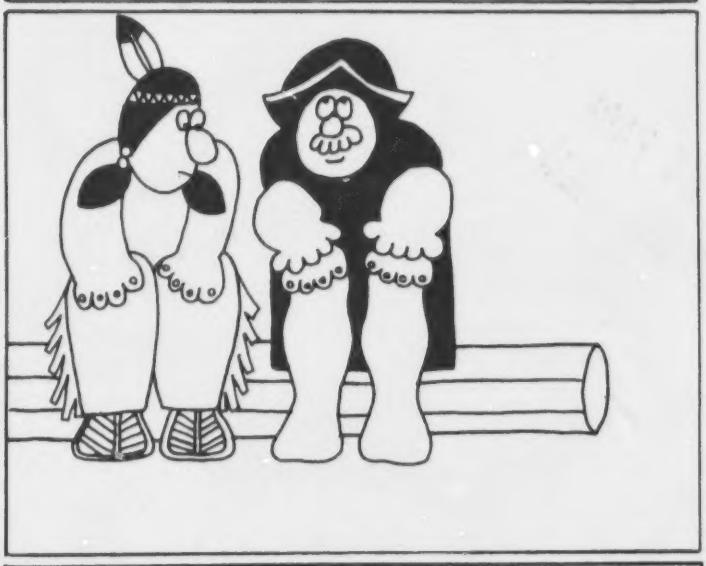
There were eleven completely different Indian languages in Canada. They were: Athapaskan, Algonkian, Inuktitut, Tlinkit, Haida, Tsimshian, Salishan, Waka-

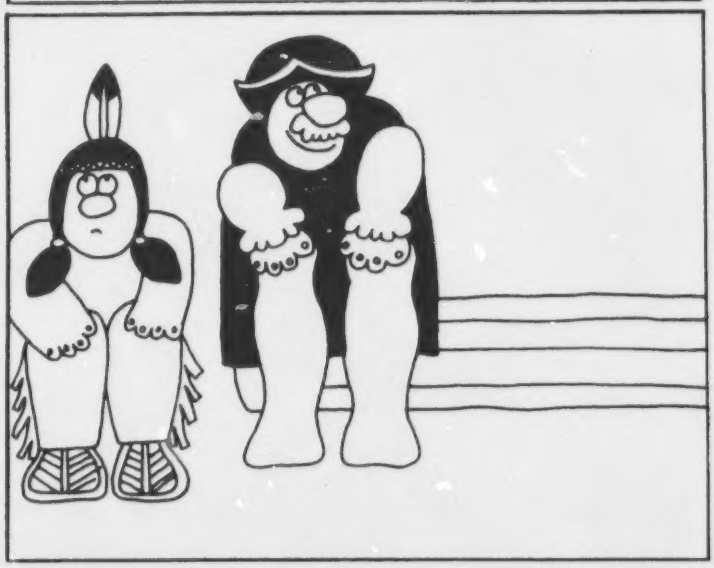












shan, Iroquoian, Kootenayan and Siouan. Most of these languages were divided into numerous dialects.

There were probably about 220,000 people living in Canada before the white man came, although nobody knows for sure. They covered almost the whole of Canada. There was almost no territory which one tribe or another did not consider its own.

When the white men came, they did not find an empty land. They found a country which the people considered their home.

Today, the Indians tell a story which shows how they feel:

> When the white man came, he found an Indian sitting on a log. "Move over!" said the white man. So the Indian moved over and allowed the white man to sit on his log. But the white man was not happy. "Move over! Move over!" he kept demanding. Finally, the Indian found himself sitting on the ground at the end of the log. Then the white man said "Now this log is all mine!"

THE FARMERS OF THE EASTERN WOODLANDS

Huron woman with gardening tool

In the forest areas of eastern Canada, two kinds of culture existed side by side. Most of the people in the Eastern Woodlands lived by hunting, fishing and gathering plants which grew in the wild. But one group of people was different.

p. 8 blank

They were the farmers. They lived, not by hunting, but by growing vegetables, especially corn. About three quarters of their food came from the crops they grew. We call these people the Farmers of the Eastern Woodlands.

The farmers lived, for the most part, in southern Ontario. Some lived along the St. Lawrence River, at one time. They all spoke the Iroquoian languages, unlike their neighbors, who spoke the Algonkian languages. Thee were three tribes of farmers in Canada: the Huron, the Tionontati (Tobacco Huron), and the Attiwandaron (Neutral Indians). Later on, they were joined by a fourth tribe of farmers, the Iroquoian-speaking Six Nations, who came from the United States.

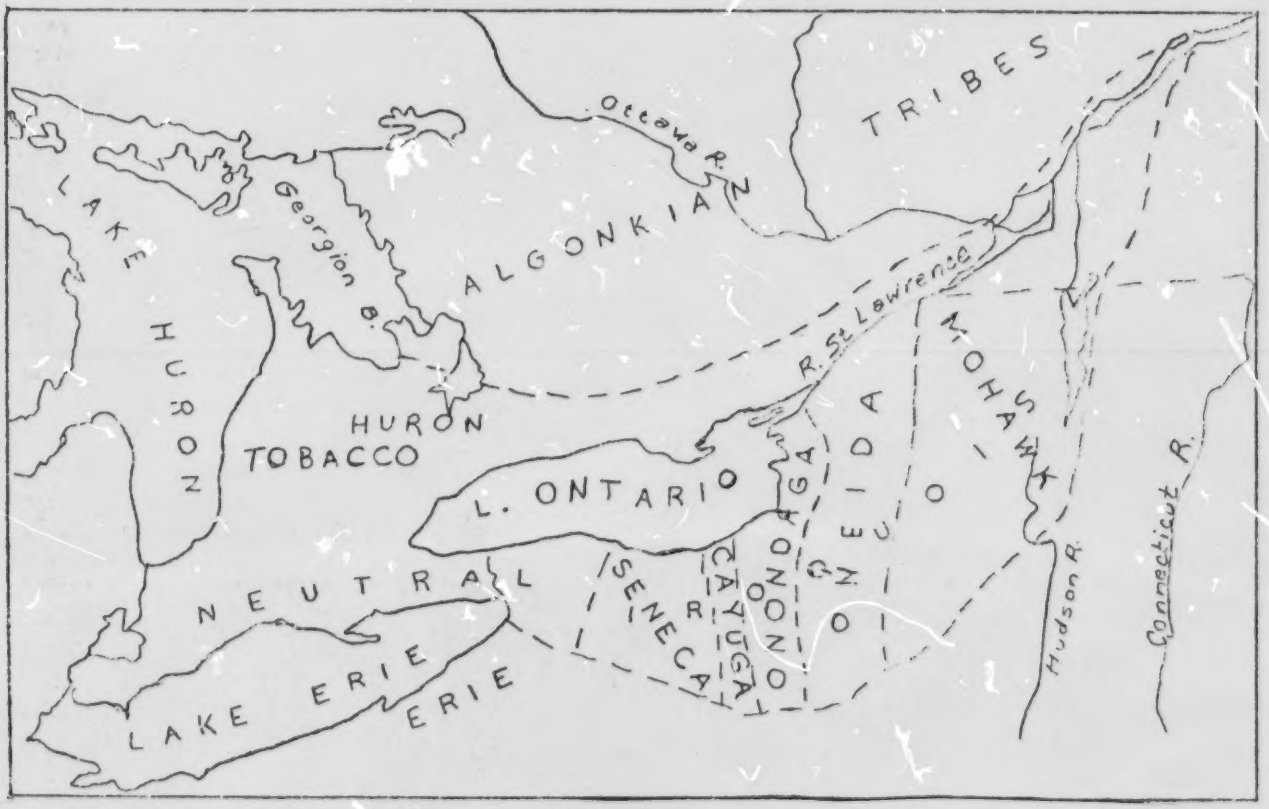
The Six Nations came from the United States because of the American Revolution of 1776. They wanted to live under British rule, rather than American. When the USA broke away from Britain, they came to Canada, to the southern part of Ontario.

Southern Ontario provided good land for the farmers of the Eastern Woodlands. That's why they became farmers in the first place.

Take the Huron, for instance. They lived between Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay, in southern Ontario.

The Huron had plenty of rainfall in their area. The land was easy to till, because it was sandy, and their tools of shell and bone could dig easily. The soil was well-drained, which is important for a good harvest. The growing season--the time in which the weather is right to grow crops--was long enough to ensure enough food for everyone.

Most of the tribes in Canada could not have become farmers even if they had wanted to, because their soil and climate



The tribes of farmers in the Eastern Woodlands

weren't right. The Huron could, though, because they had everything they needed to ensure good harvests.

The Huron only needed one more thing to make them farmers. That was the simplest, but the most important thing of all--the seeds.

You might think the seed was the easiest thing to get. But it wasn't. Most of the vegetables which the Huron grew--corn, beans and squash--did not come from Ontario. They were originally wild plants which grew in the United States and Mexico.

The Indians far to the south had learned how to grow them. They had bred them to produce bigger and better vegetables than the wild plants they had originally come from.

As time passed, two things travelled north--the seeds themselves, and the knowledge of how to grow them. They passed slowly from tribe to tribe. Finally, they reached the Huron in Ontario.

It took almost 6,000 years for this to happen. Corn, beans and squash were first developed in Mexico somewhere between 5,000 and 2,000 BC. Corn did not reach Ontario until 1000 AD. Beans and squash did not get here until 1400 AD.

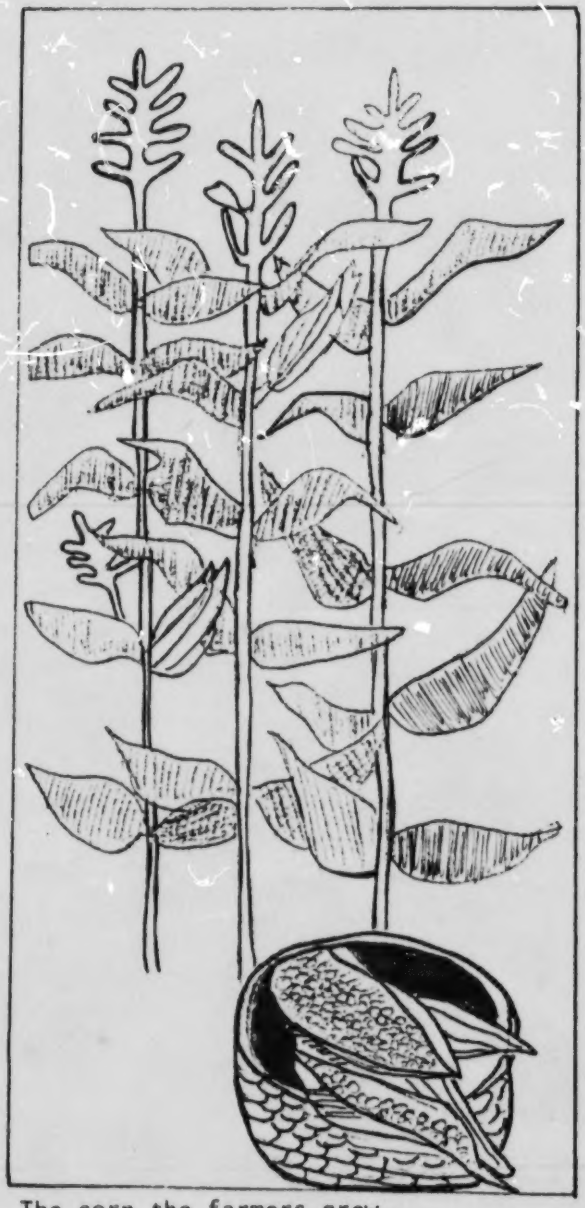
HOW THE HURON LIVED

Life among the Huron was tough. They had to work quite hard to grow their crops.

The Huron had to move their fields every ten or twenty years, because without fertilizer, the soil was soon exhausted. The small trees and undergrowth were cut down with stone axes. To cut the larger trees, the Huron had to cut rings around the trunks and build fires at the roots. Then, the fields would be ready for planting.

Because the fields were moved every ten years or so. There were miles and miles of them around the Huron villages. Once, a French missionary got lost in the fields, while trying to find the next village!

In the spring, the crops were planted. The fields were carefully cleared. The corn was prepared for planting by soaking it for several days. Then, the Huron women scraped the earth into small mounds and put nine or ten kernels of corn in each hill.



The corn the farmers grew.

Squash was planted then much as it is today. The Huron started the seeds in bark trays, filled with powdered wood,

A Huron woman pounding corn to make bread

which they kept inside, near the fire. After it got warmer, they transplanted them in the fields.

Everyone had their share of the work to do. The women planted the crops and tended them. The men cleared the new fields. Even the children helped out--by chasing away the birds and animals.

After the harvest, the corn kernels were dried, then shelled from the cobs and stored in large vats. The squash was sliced, which kept it edible for as long as five months.

From the corn they had harvested, the Huron prepared many different dishes. Corn was pounded into meal with large wooden mortars to make corn breads or puddings. Fish, bear and deer fat were used to add flavour to a number of corn dishes.

The Huron also collected wild foods to add to their diet. Jerusalem artichokes, wild plums, berries and acorns all grew nearby. The berries could be dried or baked into small cakes.

Hunting and fishing were less important. The Huron did not use meat and fish as their main foods. Instead, they used them as flavouring for the vegetable dishes. When the Huron hunted, they were more interested in getting skins for clothing, than food.

Deer were the main animals they hunted. A large group of men would band together and drive the deer into a stream, or into a large pen from which the animals could not escape. The hunters then killed them with arrows.

Often, they took only the skin and fat from the deer, and left the meat. The Huron also hunted bear and beaver, for their pelts.

But the Huron were not able to hunt enough animals to provide all their clothing needs. There were too many people living in too small an area.

For the rest of their needs, the Huron traded with tribes around them. From the Algonkians to the north, the Huron obtained winter clothing already made into suits and decorated with quill embroidery. From the Neutrals to the South, they obtained black squirrel skins to make robes. In return for these goods, the Huron traded corn and pottery.

Gradually, the Huron set up many trade routes and trading contacts. They built up an entire network of trading.

When the white men came, looking for furs, the Huron could quickly become middleman traders between the other tribes and the whites. This eventually led to their downfall.

THE HURON'S VILLAGES

Because the Huron were farmers. they could live together in large groups. Farming the land allows more people to live closer together than does hunting. So the Huron lived in large villages

There were about six large villages in Huronia, (land of the Huron), with up to forty longhouses and as many as 2,000 people in each village. The villages were surrounded by palisades, or log walls, for protection against enemy attacks.

There were smaller villages in Huronia, too. In times of war, people living in the smaller villages would flee to the larger settlements for protection.

The Huron lived in long, high buildings. Because of their shape, they were known as "longhouses." The longhouses were as much as 9 metres high and 30 metres long.

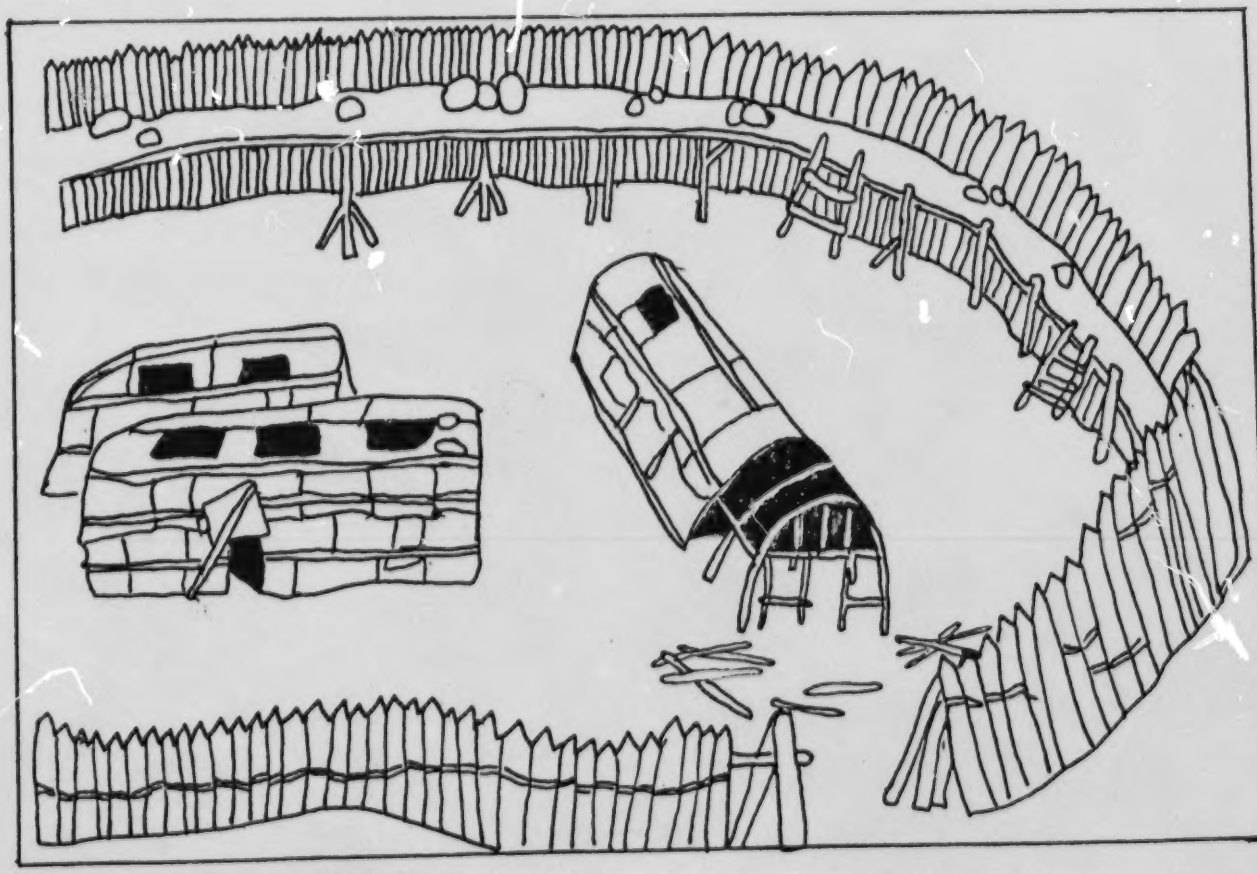
Longhouses were made of slabs of bark. The bark was tied onto a wooden frame tied down by saplings.

The longhouses could get very smoky inside. Each family had its own fire. As many as ten families lived in one longhouse.

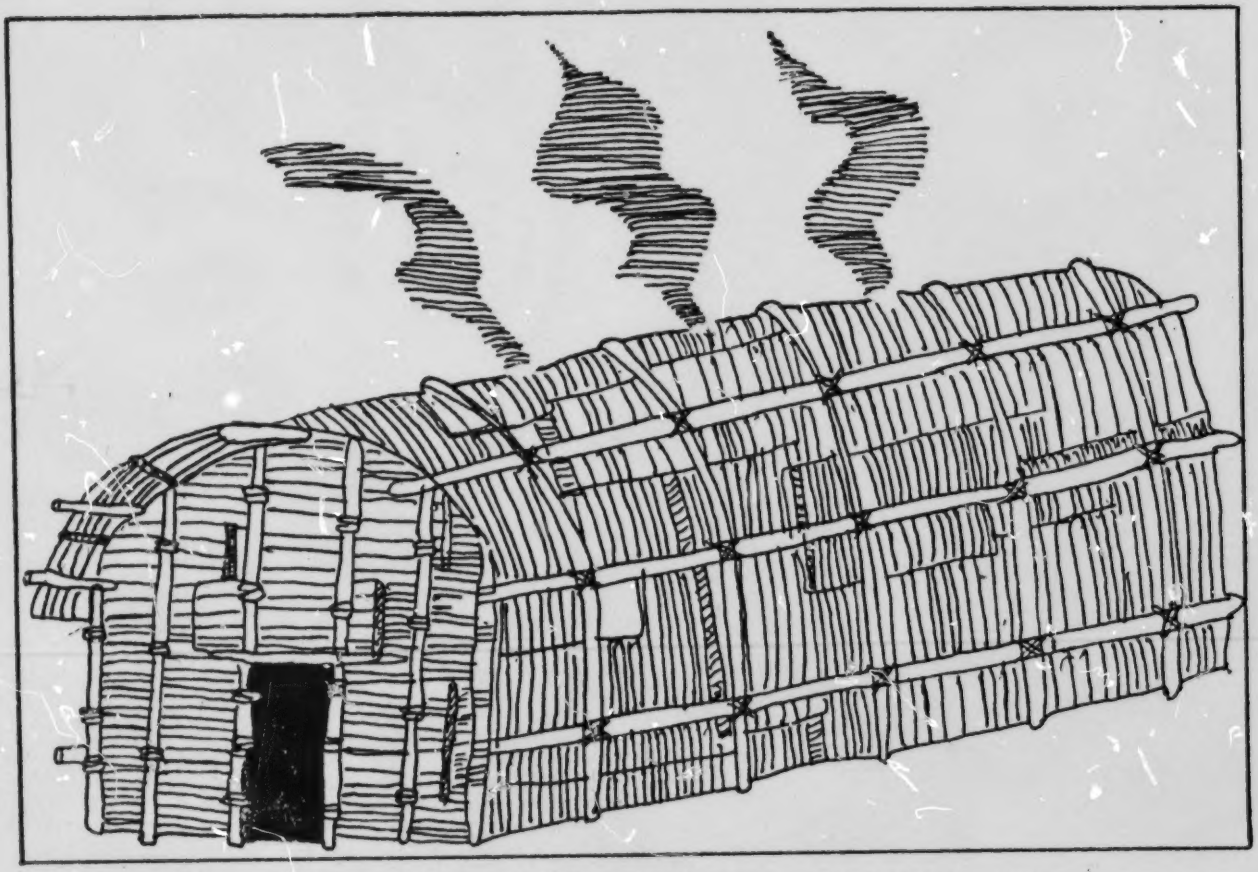
Because of the fires, the longhouse villages could burn down very easily, although the Huron tried to build them so that fires would not spread from one building to another. The Huron usually buried all their valuable possessions, so they would not be burned if a longhouse caught on fire.

The people living in the same longhouse were usually all members of the same clan. A clan was a large group of related people. Children usually belonged to their mothers' clans, and husbands usually went to live with their wives' clan.

The chief of each clan sat on a



A section of a Huron Village. Notice the longhouses, where members of the same clan lived.



A closeup view of a Huron village. Although there are three fires going in this building, some longhouses had as many as ten!

council which governed the village. A chief was always a man. But he inherited his title not from his father, but from his mother's brother--his uncle.

Each village council then chose an overall chief from among the clan chiefs. This single chief represented the village at meetings of the Huron Confederacy.

When the French came to Huronia, they were puzzled and amazed at the system of government the Huron had set up. They found it hard to believe that law and order could be maintained among thousands of people without prisons, or capital punishment, or even police!

The manner in which the Huron made their decisions was also impressive. After a meeting was called, and all the chiefs gathered, the subject to be decided on was announced. Then, the chiefs of each village consulted among themselves to decide what to do.

Then, their spokesman gave the answer. He spoke slowly and distinctly, repeating and summarizing what had been said before, to show he had understood it clearly.

If someone were absent, the chiefs first decided whether the meeting would go on without that person. If they were discussing a matter of concern to the person absent, they would not want to make a decision until he had arrived.

The formality of the proceedings helped to encourage politeness, moderation and good humour. Meetings often went on far into the night until the issue at hand was finally decided upon, to everyone's satisfaction.

THE HURON MEET THE WHITE MEN

The Huron came into contact with white men long before many of the other

tribes in Canada. Their first visitors were the French, who had established themselves along the St. Lawrence River.

Samuel de Champlain journeyed up to the Ottawa River to Huronia in 1615. Occasionally, other explorers also visted the Huron country.

The Huron's main contacts, though, were with two groups of French people: the traders and the missionaries. These two groups were to have an important effect on the future of the Huron.

The missionaries felt it was their duty to convert the Huron to Christianity. Although they were well-meaning men, they did not care that the Huron already had a religion that was important to them.

The Huron believed in a supernatural being named Yoscaha. Yoscaha lived in the sky, and created the world and the Huron people.

They also believed in the existence of numerous spirits called Oki, who could work for both good and evil. These Oki appeared to human beings in dreams, which, the Huron believed, were the language of the soul. The dreams foretold the future and gave the Huron advice on how to behave.

After death, the Huron believed their souls went to villages in the sky, where life continued in much the same way it had on earth. However, souls did not go on their journey until an elaborate ceremony, called the Feast of the Dead, was held. During this ceremony, hundreds of people were buried in a common grave together with all the goods they would need to live in contentment in the afterlife.

An example of the pottery used by the Huron.

The first missionary to go to Huronia was a Recollet friar, Father le Caron, who arrived with Champlain in 1615. He stayed with the Huron for a year, then left. He returned, though in 1624, to found a mission. In 1626, he was joined by several Jesuit priests.

These two groups--the Recollets and the Jesuits--continued to work with the Huron until 1649, when the Huron nation was finally broken up.

It is difficult to know how much success the missionaries had in converting the Indians to Christianity. Certainly, they made some converts. But for a long time, the Huron resisted their efforts, and held fast to their old religion, which they much preferred. Only after their old way of life was destroyed did they begin to convert in large numbers to Christianity.

In the sense of making converts, the missionaries were probably not all that important. However, in another way, they were important.

Every year, they sent back to France long reports called "relations," describing in great detail what life was like in the Huron villages, how the Huron thought and what they believed in. These reports were saved.

Today, the Jesuit Relations form the basis for most of our knowledge about the Huron. Since much of the Huron culture was destroyed, we would never know what it was like if it were not for the writings of these missionaries.

THE TRADERS AND WAR WITH THE IROQUOIS

The second group of white men to come in contact with the Huron were the white traders. They were interested in the beaver pelts the Huron got. They could ship them back to France, where they would be made into expensive beaver hats.

Although the Huron did not have many beaver in their own country, they had trading contacts with the tribes to the north who did have beaver. So the Huron became middlemen, getting beaver pelts from the northern tribes and trading them with the French.

This trade made the Huron very wealthy, and gave them many goods which made their lives easier. From the French they received iron hoes to replace their old ones of bone and shell. They began to use iron knives, axes and arrowheads, all of which came from the French. Brass kettles which they got in trade lasted much longer than the old pots. The Huron preferred French porcelain beads to shell beads, and the women liked to wear brass rings and bracelets. The Huron even acquired new food, such as peas and watermelon, from the French, as well as new kinds of animals such as house cats, geese, ducks and chickens.

The Huron were unable to enjoy their new wealth and comfort very long, though.

Together with their trade goods, the French brought new diseases. By 1650, many Huron had died in epidemics of smallpox and measles.

The white traders also brought war with the Iroquois, and it was war which eventually wiped the Huron out. The Iroquois lived in northern New York State.

Both the Iroquois and the Huron had been encouraged to trap far more beaver than they normally would have. The more pelts the traders sent back to France, the wealthier they became. But, after a while, the beaver began to run out, especially in the land of the Iroquois.

Now, the Iroquois did not trade with the French. They traded with the British and the Dutch. The French on the one side, and the British and Dutch on the other, were constantly fighting each other for power over the new world.

The Dutch and the English wanted more furs. So they encouraged the Iroquois to fight the Huron and take their furs. The Dutch and English were pleased because not only were they still getting furs, but the French were not.

The Huron, who were friendly to the French, were being beaten by the Iroquois. The Dutch and English supplied the Iroquois with guns in order to make sure they won.

By 1645, after a series of defeats, the Huron were beaten. They abandoned their villages. Many died from lack of food, since they could no longer grow crops.

Others found refuge with neighbouring tribes. A large number went to live with their former enemies, the Iroquois, and became members of the Iroquois tribe. About 300 Huron moved to Quebec City, where they could be protected by the French. Some travelled, finally ending up on the Wyandotte reservation in Oklahoma. Others still live close to their old home, in a reserve in southern Ontario. Today, only one group still speaks the Huron language: the 1,041 people living at Lorette, near Quebec City.

It took only forty years of contact with white culture to make an end to the traditional lifestyle of the Huron.

There are three ways by which we can know how they lived. The first is by reading the reports from the missionaries who lived among the Huron. The second is to dig up the old villages to find traces of pottery, food and houses, to find out how they lived. The third way is to study their descendents, or the descendents of similar people. In these ways, we can recreate in our minds how the Huron lived.

Recommended Sources

Bruce Trigger. The Huron: farmers of the North.

Indians of the Plains: the Blackfoot

To the stretch of high, flat land east of the Rocky Mountains, we give the name "the Plains." This culture area is found in the centre of Canada, in the southern areas of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The climate was dry, and the temperatures extreme. The mountains and the inland position of the area kept out the rain.

The land was poor for farming. But on its short grass, ideal for grazing, roamed vast herds of buffalo.

All the people of the Plains, from no matter what tribe, shared something in common. They all hunted the buffalo to stay alive.

The Blackfoot certainly did. In fact, most of what the Blackfoot did also applied to the other tribes of the plains. Those trbes were the Assiniboine, Plains Cree, Sarcee, Gros-Ventre and Sioux. But in this section, we'll take a look at the Blackfoot.

The Blackfoot

The Blackfoot had a story which told them where they came from.

In the beginning, Old Man and Old Woman decided to make people.

Then, Old Man got cranky. He insisted that he should have the first say in everything. Old Woman agreed, as long as she could have the second say.

"Let the people have eyes and mouths in their faces, and let them be straight up and down," decreed Old Man.

"Yes, let them have eyes and mouths; but they shall be set crosswise in their faces," added Old Woman.

Then, Old Man said: "Let the people have ten fingers on each hand."

"No!" declared Old Woman, "ten fingers are too many. They will just be in the way. Let them have four fingers and a thumb on each hand."

So the people were made. Imagine what we would have all looked like if Old Man had his way!

Today, we have another explanation for where the Blackfoot came from. They were Algonkian people, who lived in the timber country around Lesser Slave Lake. Long ago, they began to move south and west, until they reached the plains at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. This was their territory until the time when they acquired horses.

There were three tribes who made up the Blackfoot nation: the Blackfoot proper, the Blood and the Piegan. The name "Blackfoot" came from the Indians' own name for themselves, *Siksikauwa*. This name described their moccasins, either because they were painted black, or because they were covered with black dust from prairie fires. The three tribes of the Blackfoot were

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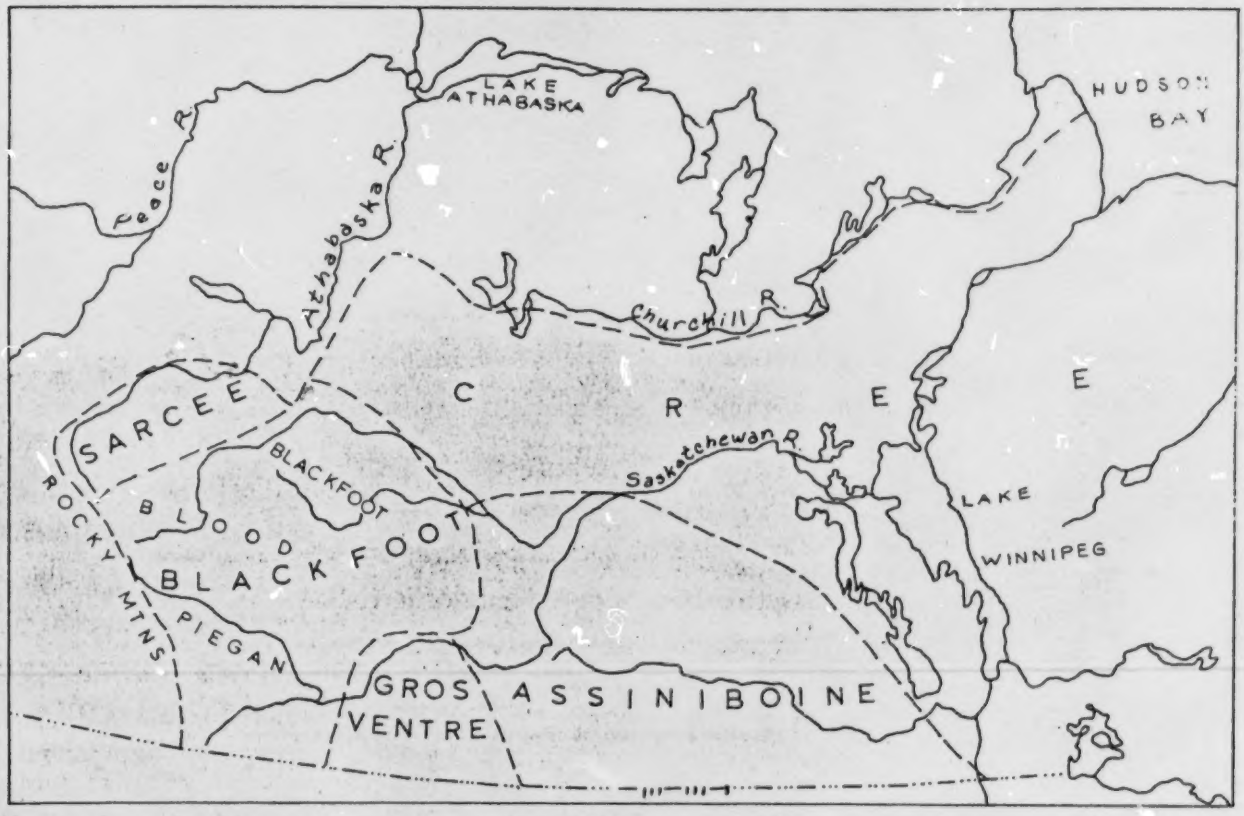


The map shows the location of the Plains tribes.

united by a common language, common customs, and by frequent marriage between the tribes. To their enemies, they presented a united front; the rest of the time, they went their own ways.

Before the Blackfoot acquired horses, they could not move very far or very fast. When they travelled, the men walked ahead, carrying only their weapons, to be ready in case of enemy attacks. The women walked behind, carrying their babies and heavy bundles of goods. Big dogs pulled the rest of the tribe's goods on *travois*, made of tent poles. A good dog could pull 27 or 32 kilograms of weight, but dogs were often difficult to control. They liked to get into fights, or to chase after animals passing on the trail. Because of these problems, the Blackfoot travelled very slowly. Eight or nine kilometres was considered a good day's march. Neither could they have very many possessions, because everything had to be carried by the women and the dogs.

The Blackfoot lived by hunting the buffalo. Since the buffalo moved around, the Blackfoot had to travel all the time to follow them. Their favorite method of hunting buffalo was to surround them.

When a group of men found a herd of buffalo, they ran to find the women. The women brought their dog travois and placed them in the ground to make a fence. Then the women and dogs hid behind the fence, while the men chased the buffalo into the corral. The barking dogs and shouting women kept the buffalo from breaking through the fence, while the men rushed in to kill them with arrows and lances.

Driving the buffalo into the corral was not easy. Sometimes they became frightened before the men reached them and ran the other way. Sometimes the buffalo were nowhere to be found. If many buffalo were killed, the Blackfoot could live well through the long cold winter. But if too few were killed, the tribe might starve before spring.

The Blackfoot preferred buffalo meat, but they also hunted other animals. Deer, moose, elk and smaller mammals were welcomed when buffalo were scarce. Wild plants, especially roots in early summer and berries in the fall, gave variety to their diet.

The buffalo supplied almost all the needs of the Blackfoot.

Its meat was rich and nourishing, providing a number of different dishes. The Blackfoot ate it boiled, or roasted over coals like a barbecue. They made a kind of sausage from it; or dried it and mixed it with berries and wild peppermint to make *pemmican* for the winter.

From the buffalo's skin, the women made moccasins, braided ropes, tent covers and clothing. Buffalo robes, with the hair still on, were used as blankets. The horns were used as containers or carved into spoons and cups. The hair was braided into ropes or used to stuff padded saddles. The sinews provided thread for sewing, as well as the strings for bows. They even made a kind of yellow paint from the buffalo's gallstone.

The Blackfoot depended on the buffalo to supply almost all their needs.

The life of the Blackfoot was changed a great deal when they acquired horses.

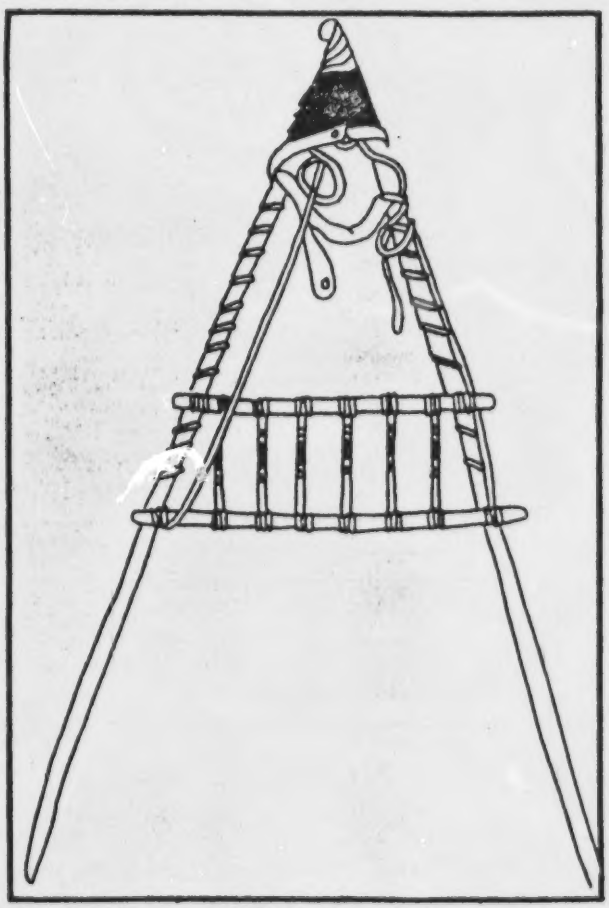
Horses were not native to North America. The first horses were brought to North America by the Spanish explorers in Mexico. Some of these horses escaped and became wild, but the Indians did not know how to use them. They thought that horses were a new kind of deer and killed them for food. Later on, some Mexican Indians began to work for the Spanish and learned how to train and ride horses, as well as how to make saddles and bridles. These Indians taught the tribes living to the north how to use horses.

Gradually, the horses, and the knowledge of how to use and care for them, moved up through the plains. It took almost 200 years before they reached the tribes in Canada. The Blackfoot probably acquired horses sometime between 1500 and 1600 A.D.

Horses were ideally suited to the plains. Like the buffalo, they grew fat on the prairie grasses and could move freely across the wide open spaces. The tribes who lived in wooded areas could never use horses, because they had neither grass nor open spaces.

When they first got horses, the Blackfoot named them "big dog" because they reminded them of the dogs which carried their belongings. Later they renamed them "elk dogs", because of their size and usefulness.

The horse made life much easier for the Blackfoot. With horses, they could travel much faster, and could follow the buffalo herds, rather than hoping that the buffalo would pass near their camps.



The travois was used to carry all the possessions of the tribe when they went hunting.

They no longer had to rely on the old method of corralling the buffalo: a method which often depended on luck. Now, men riding swift buffalo-running horses could ride into the middle of the herd and kill all the buffalo they needed before they ran away.

Because the horses could carry much heavier loads than the dogs, the Blackfoot were able to have more possessions. They could have larger tipis which they preferred, and extra suits of decorated clothing, as well as more buffalo robes for winter. They were able to prepare and carry with them extra supplies of food, so that they did not have to worry about starvation in winter.

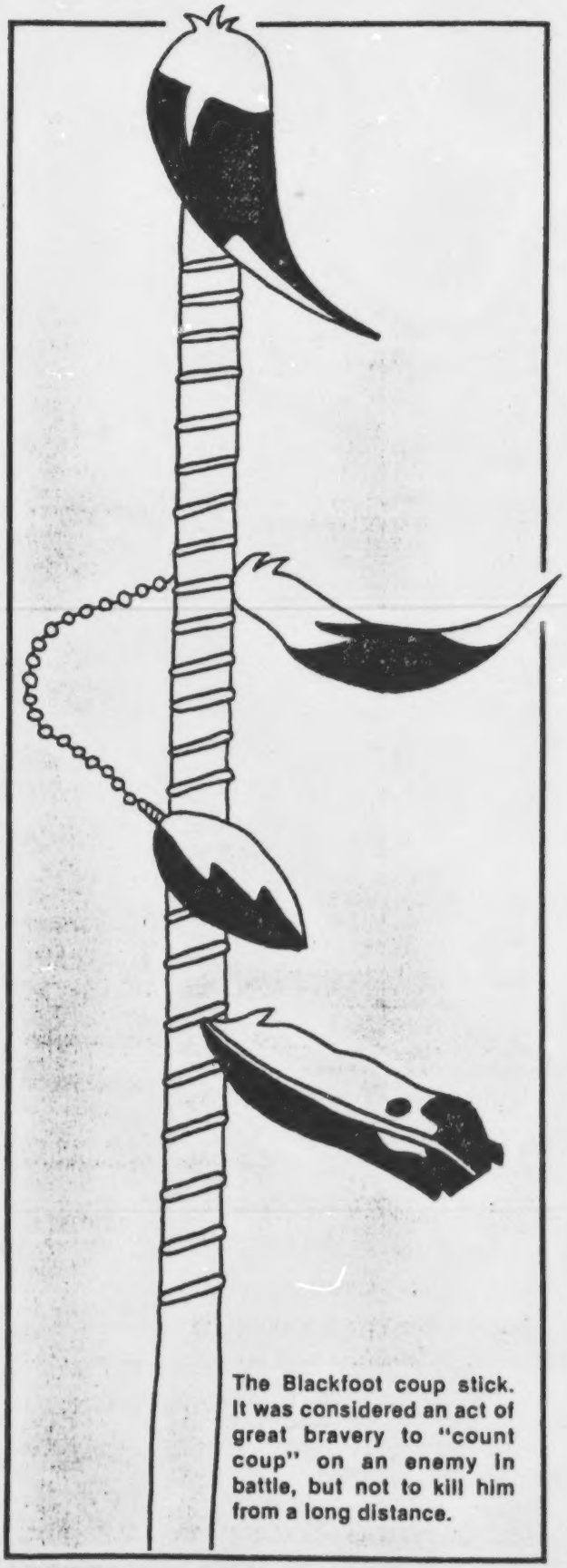
Because horses were so important, a family's wealth came to be measured in horses. A family needed ten horses to move camp. A very wealthy man might have many more; some had as many as fifty to a hundred horses. A very poor family might have only one or two horses.

These poorer families looked to the wealthy to lend them extra horses for travelling or to hunt buffalo. A wealthy man who was generous with his horses was admired by everyone; and, if he were also wise and brave, might become a great chief. A wealthy man who was stingy was not liked by anyone.

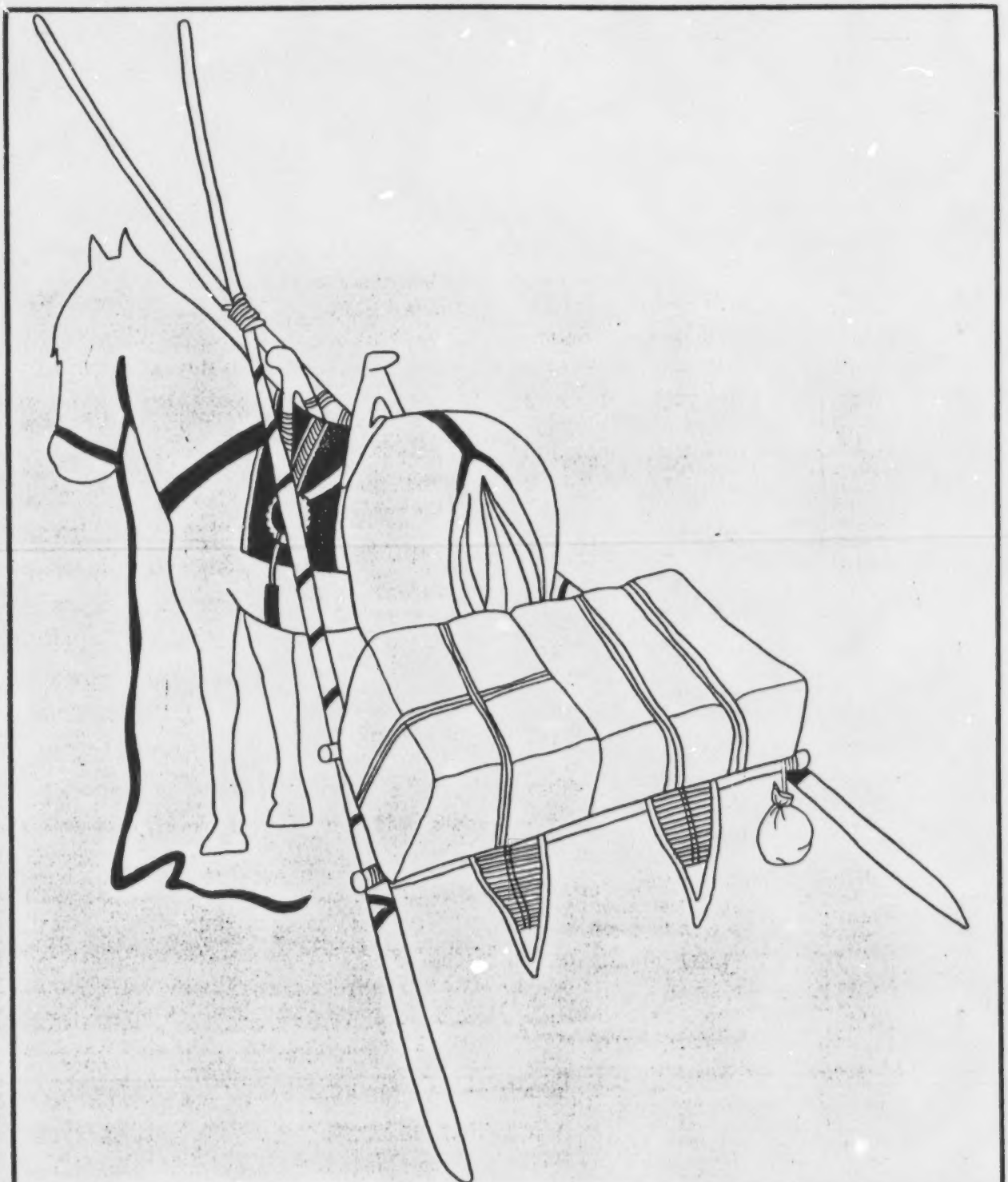
The Blackfoot could not breed all the horses they wanted. The rest they acquired either by trading or by stealing them from their neighbours.

Raiding for horses became an important activity among the Blackfoot. It allowed a young man to prove his bravery and skill, and also allowed him to start building up the horse herd which would make him wealthy and respected. Unless a young man came from a family with many horses, it was the only way he could become wealthy.

Usually a raid was organized by a man who had proved his skill as a leader. The leader chose a group of men whom he



The Blackfoot coup stick. It was considered an act of great bravery to "count coup" on an enemy in battle, but not to kill him from a long distance.



The horse travois helped the Blackfoot to become much more mobile. With the horse, they could move longer distances in a shorter time. It helped them to find new buffalo herds, but also brought them into conflicts with their neighbours.

trusted, and together they set off for enemy territory. Once an enemy camp was located, the raiders waited until dark. Then they stole in among the tents and tried to lead off the horses which were tethered to their owners' tents.

Usually the best horses, the fleet buffalo-runners were taken. If possible, the raiders also tried to take the ordinary horses, which were kept in a herd near the camp.

All this had to be done without making any sound which would waken the sleeping enemy. It took courage, patience and skill. Then the whole party set off for home as fast as possible, driving the captured horses with them.

The Blackfoot acquired many horses this way. However, since their enemies also raided horses from the Blackfoot, they probably lost many horses as well.

Most Blackfoot warfare took the form of raiding for horses. However, sometimes they fought pitched battles with other tribes.

In battle, the warriors lined up facing each other. They began by calling their enemies names, and by singing war songs which told of their own bravery. Then the two sides charged each other.

Fighting went on until one side admitted defeat. In these battles, few people were killed.

It was considered a much greater honour to "count coup" on an enemy than to kill him. "Coups" were actions which took courage and skill to perform. They were ranked according to how difficult they were. The highest honour was to capture an enemy's gun, without killing him, since a man with a gun was a dangerous opponent. The capture of a bow, shield, war bonnet, war shirt or pipe were also coups of high rank, since the enemy valued these and fought hard to keep them. Killing a man from a distance or taking the scalp from a dead man were less valuable coups since these did not take as much bravery.

After the battle, a feast was held at which warriors described the coups they had counted. If there were witnesses who swore to the coup, then the honour was granted to that person. To gain such honours was one of the chief goals of a Blackfoot man.

Why did the Blackfoot carry on wars and raids with their neighbours? At various times they were at war with the Gros Ventre, Crow and Shoshone to the south, with the Assiniboine and Plains Cree to the north, and with the Kootenay and Salish to the west. Probably, horses were the cause.

Before all these tribes acquired horses, they lived on the edge of the prairies and seldom saw each other. The horse allowed them to move out into the prairies and follow the buffalo.

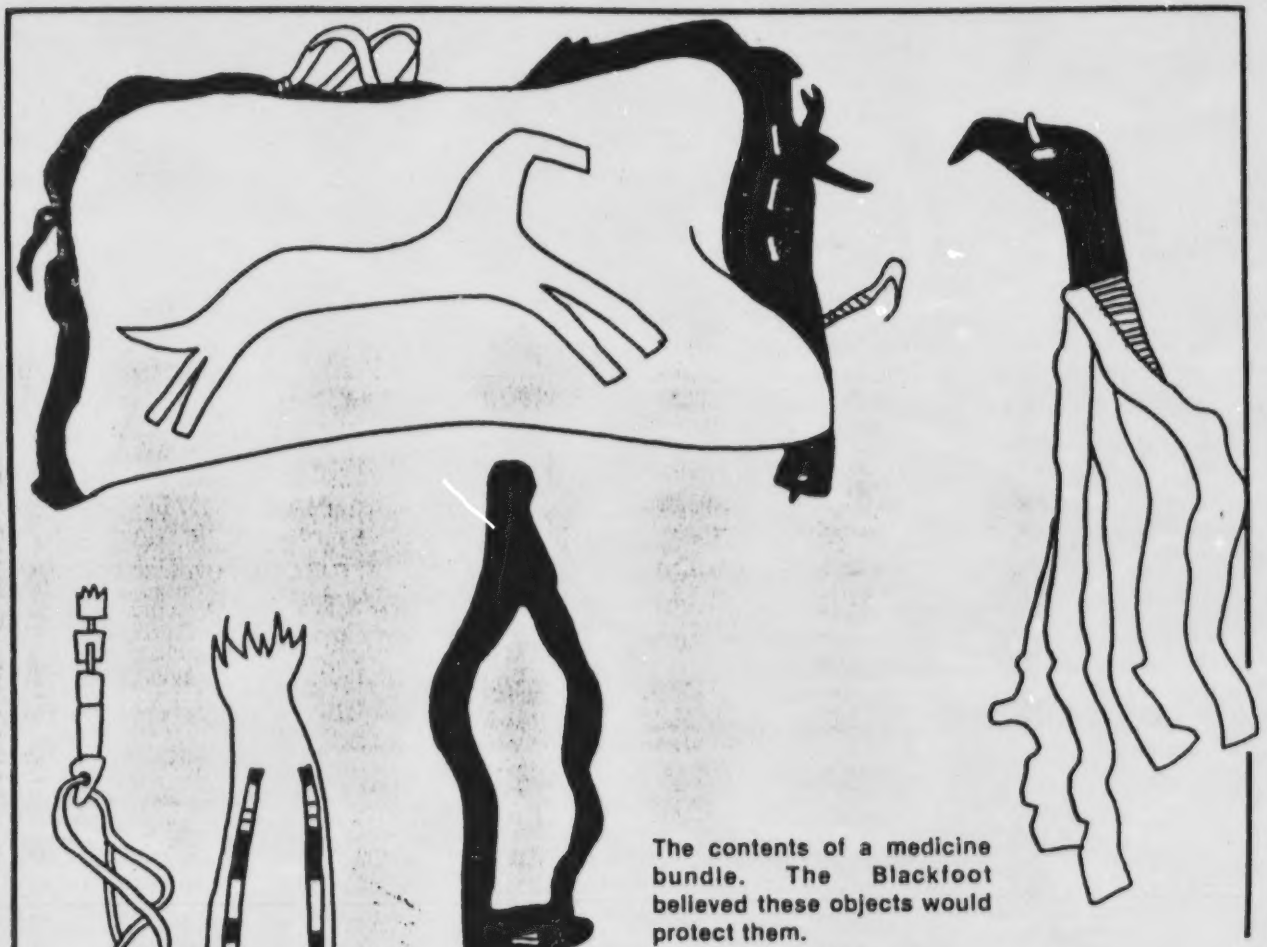
All the tribes wanted to do this, and they all wanted a large territory they could call their own. This population pressure led to conflict, which was made worse by each tribe's desire to build up large supplies of horses, which they could only get from each other.

The lifestyle of the Blackfoot, which was based on hunting buffalo and raiding for horses, influenced their religion, their politics and their marriages. Each Blackfoot band had two chiefs: a peace chief and a war chief. As these names suggest, the peace chief was in charge of leading the group in peaceful ways. He decided which routes the band would travel, or settled disputes within the camp. The band war chief decided on matters of war. Before they acquired horses, there was probably little need for two chiefs.

The chiefs could not force their people to do anything. They held power only as long as the people agreed with their decisions and were willing to follow them. A chief had to be a wise man who was also generous to those less well-off than himself.

A chief also had to be a religious man, who was able to call on the spirits to help his people. Every Blackfoot hoped to acquire a spirit helper who would give him good advice and strength and courage in times of trouble.

Spirit helpers were gained through dreams. When he was about thirteen, every young Blackfoot went into the wilderness to seek a helper. There he remained without



The contents of a medicine bundle. The Blackfoot believed these objects would protect them.

food or water, praying to the powers of the sky, earth and water to have pity on him. When he was exhausted and fell asleep, a spirit appeared to him in a dream usually taking the form of an animal or bird, although sometimes it looked like a man.

The spirit promised to help the young person (sometimes girls also sought a spirit helper). The spirit showed the person what objects were sacred to it, and told him how to call on its power when in need. The young person bound the sacred objects into a "medecine bundle" which he carried with him for the rest of his life.

The powers of the spirit helper were called on to bring success in hunting and in war. A great chief was one whose spirit helper was particularly strong, and who led the chief and his followers to victory.

Warfare and hunting also had an effect on Blackfoot marriage. Many men were killed, either in battle or in hunting accidents. This left more women than men: there were about three men for every five women.

The Blackfoot adopted the same solution to this problem that the Arabs in Asia did. While a poor man had only one wife, a wealthy man who could support

them had as many as five wives. Other men had two or three wives.

This system protected women whose husbands or sons were killed. The Blackfoot preferred to marry sisters, because sisters were more likely to be happy together.

The first white men to meet the Blackfoot were French fur traders. They arrived in the Blackfoot country around 1751, hoping to build a fort, but they did not stay long.

Next came explorers from the Hudson's Bay Company. The English Company was afraid that the Indians would bring their furs to the French rather than to them. In 1754, the Hudson's Bay Company sent Anthony Hendry to persuade the Blackfoot to bring their furs to Hudson Bay.

The Blackfoot refused. They lived very well by hunting buffalo in their own country, and they feared that they would starve on the long trip to the Bay, for they did not know how to use canoes and did not like to eat fish.

In 1772, the Hudson's Bay Company sent another trader, Mathew Cocking, to try to persuade the Blackfoot to come to the Bay. Again the Blackfoot refused.

So the Hudson's Bay Company decided that if the Blackfoot would not come to them, they must go to the Blackfoot. In 1780, they built the first trading fort, Buckingham House, in the heart of the Blackfoot territory.

The Hudson's Bay Company expected a rich harvest of beaver from the Blackfoot. There were many beaver in the streams. But the Blackfoot were not interested in hunting beaver because to some Blackfoot, the beaver was a sacred animal.

However, they loved to hunt buffalo, and they offered meat and pemmican, as well as horses, to the traders. In return they asked for guns and ammunition, tobacco and liquor.

While the guns made hunting much easier, the liquor created many problems in the years ahead. The Blackfoot were very fond of liquor, partly because it allowed them to feel the same state of abandon and religious joy that they felt while fasting in search of their spirit helpers. But many Blackfoot froze to death when caught out in the open prairie while drunk. Many more traded all their horses and household goods for liquor, and so had nothing to keep them during the winter.

In 1869, the Hudson's Bay Company gave its vast territory in the west to Canada. For the next few years there was no law in the land.

American fur traders moved into the Blackfoot country and offered whisky to the Indians in return for buffalo robes, which had become popular in the east. This was a dark time for the Blackfoot. One Indian agent estimated that as much as one-quarter of the Blackfoot tribe died from the effects of whisky.

Many also died from smallpox which swept through the tribes.

By 1878, there were almost no buffalo left, and those Blackfoot who survived became even poorer. The millions of buffalo which had roamed the prairies had all been killed to provide buffalo robes for the people in the east. Without the buffalo, the Blackfoot could no longer supply their basic needs.

The Canadian government finally became aware of the lawless situation on the prairies. In 1874, it began to recruit men for the newly-formed Northwest Mounted Police. These Police were sent out to bring law and order to the west.

When the whisky traders heard of the coming of the Police, most of them closed their forts and ran. Others were arrested and imprisoned. The Blackfoot chiefs were grateful to the Police for ridding their country of the whisky traders and agreed to work with them. As Crowfoot, one of the leading chiefs, said:

> If the police had not come to this country, where would we

be now? Bad men and whisky were killing us so fast that very few of us would have been left today. The police have protected us as the feathers of the bird protect it from the frosts of the winter.

The Blackfoot and the Mounted Police were to need all the friendship and wisdom they could muster in the years ahead. By 1876, white settlers were beginning to move into the Blackfoot country.

In the United States, this settlement had led to bloody conflicts between the Indians and the whites. To avoid this, the Canadian government arranged to make a treaty with the Blackfoot.

By this treaty, the Blackfoot surrendered the right to all their lands. In return, they were granted reserves of one square mile per family, as well as payments of cash and cattle, seeds and tools to begin farming. In making the treaty, the respect and friendship between the police and the Blackfoot played an important part. It was not easy to persuade the younger men that they must give up their war-like ways and settle down on their reserves to become peaceful farmers.

However, the old chiefs saw that the old days were ended and the new way lay in friendship with the white men. They did not like it, but they felt that they had no other choice.

In 1885, the Blackfoot were invited to join the Riel Rebellion. After much thought, Crowfoot, the Blackfoot chieftain refused. In this way, he probably saved his people from the war and the punishment given to all those who took part and lost.

Today, the Blackfoot remain on their reserves. Many are successful farmers and ranchers. There are probably more Blackfoot now than there were before the white men came. In 1809, there were 5,200 Blackfoot. Today there are 8,030 living on three reserves in Alberta.

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The people of the Eastern Woodlands

One of the largest culture areas in Canada was the Eastern Woodlands. As the name tells us, it included all the tribes living in the forested area of eastern Canada. The Eastern Woodlands stretched from the maritimes to Manitoba; from the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes to the treeline, far to the north.

A number of tribes, living in similar ways and all speaking dialects of the Algonkian language, inhabited this area. They included the Beothuk, Micmac, Malecite, Montaignais, Nascapi, Algonkin, Ojibwa and Cree.

The country was a beautiful one, covered with forests and dotted with thousands of lakes and rivers. The forests were filled with animals--moose, woodland caribou, bear, beaver, mink, otter, wolverine, muskrat, porcupine, rabbits, deer, wolf, fox and marten--enough to feed everyone. In the northern areas, the people hunted caribou. To the east, the Micmac and Malecite were able to hunt seals and whales.

THE OJIBWA

One of the largest tribes of the eastern woodlands was the Ojibwa. They lived around lake Superior and to the north of lake Huron. They also lived to the west of the great lakes, in part of what is now the United States.

How did the Ojibwa get their name? They were sometimes also called the Chippewa, or the Anicinabe, meaning "original man." But "Ojibwa" was the word that stuck. It meant "people whose mocassins have puckered seams." They were probably given the name by other tribes, who recognized their tracks by the marks their mocassins made.

How did the Ojibwa live? Mainly by hunting and fishing. And the men had to be pretty good at it, too. They used no guns--only bows and arrows, and snares and traps--to catch the animals.

But there was more to hunting than being skilful with weapons. The Ojibwa had to be wise in the ways of the woods. They had to know how the animals lived, where they fed and what they liked to eat. The hunters had to learn what routes the animals travelled, and where they were likely to be at certain time of the year. The knowledge took many years to acquire.

But it was needed for the survival of the people. For only one day, a band of 50 Ojibwa would need two deer, or 40 rabbits or 106 kilograms of fish, just to survive. If the band also killed a bear, there was enough food for two days. An elk supplied four days' food, and a moose five.

So it was important that every father teach his son the skills of hunting and fishing. When the time came for the son

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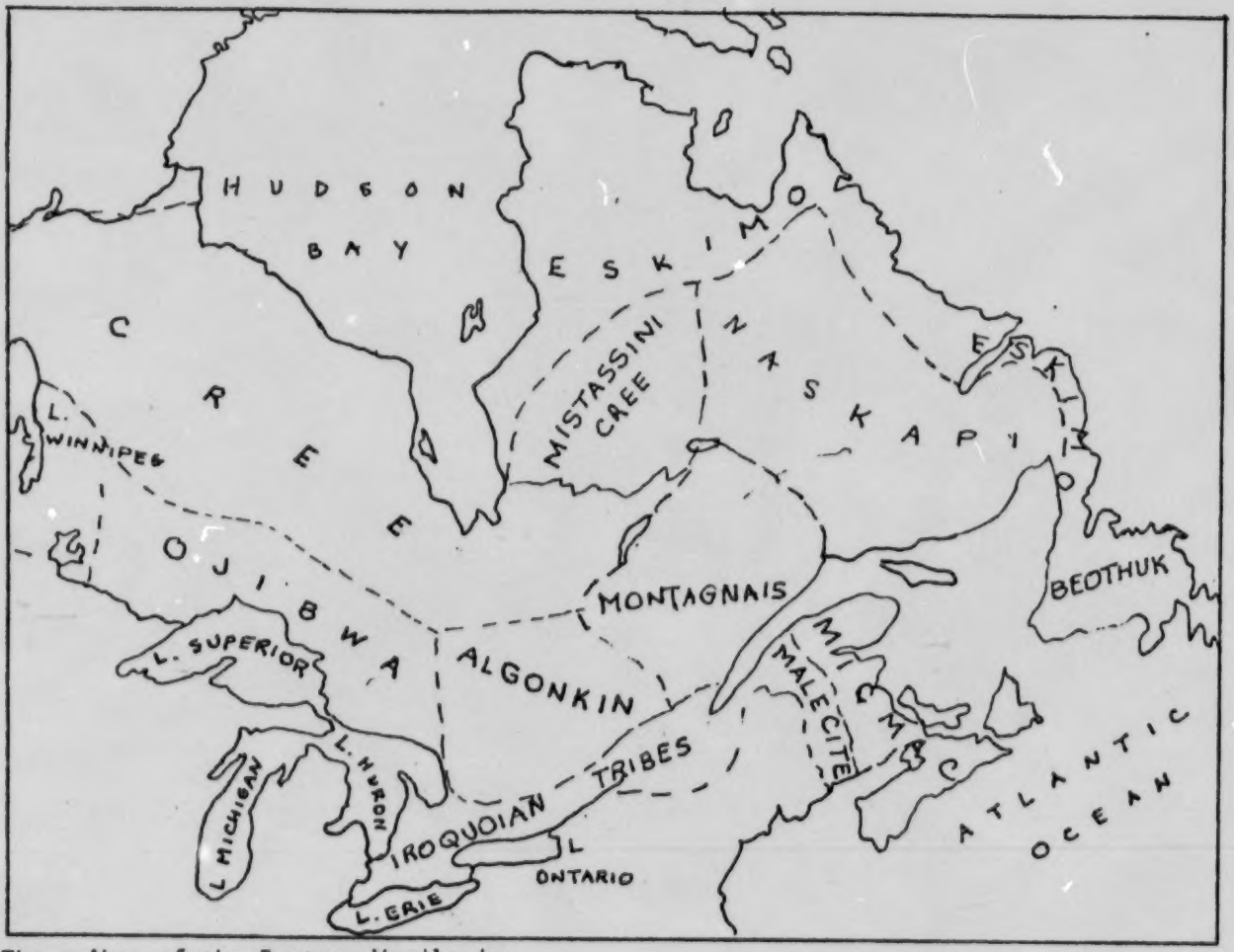


The tribes of the Eastern Woodlands

to provide for his own people, he would be able to support them.

Fishing was as important as hunting, in some places. In the rapids at Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, for example, there were so many fish that a band could live on them all year round. In other places, there were usually not that many fish. But they could still be caught at certain times of the year.

Sometimes, the people would catch the fish in a bag-like net at the end of a long pole. The fisherman would stand in the bow of his canoe, as it slid backwards over the rapids. He would scoop the fish out of the water as he went along. Each scoop would get him six or seven large fish. He would continue fishing until his canoe was full.

In winter, the people would cut holes in the ice. Then, they would lure the fish to the holes with carved wooden "minnows." When the fish came near, the people speared them.

In season, the Ojibwa enjoyed fish eggs. They didn't know it, but the food they were eating would soon become one of the most expensive in the world--caviar.

Meat and fish weren't the only things that the Ojibwa had to eat. They planted corn, beans and squash, and harvested wild rice.

To plant corn, they usually cleared the land and planted the seeds in the spring. Then, they went away. In the fall, they would return to the patches to pick their corn. It was usually picked while it was still green, because there wasn't enough time for it to grow completely.

Wild rice was very popular with the Ojibwa. It isn't really rice, but a kind of wild grass which grows in the water.

They would usually collect the wild rice in their canoes, leaning the stalks over the edge and shaking the grains into the canoe bottom. But they had to make sure there would be enough rice to pick next year, too. So they would also shake some of the grains back into the water.

Wild rice is a very popular food today, but it is also very expensive. It is still collected mainly by Indians, who sell it to grocery stores. It is cooked the same way as ordinary rice, but it looks like a long brown seed.

Maple sugar was also a favourite with the Ojibwa. They were very fond of it. It's a good thing they were, too, because it was the only sweet they had during the winter.

Each family had its own stand of maple trees. In the spring, they tapped the trees, just as modern farmers do, to get the sap. The sap was then boiled down to make maple sugar.

The Ojibwa had a pretty good diet. They got different types of food from various places. But it was hard work. You see, not all the foods the Ojibwa needed were to be found in the same place. They had to be constantly on the move around their territory to find food.

They might begin the year at a good fishing river. Then, they would move to their corn patches to plant crops. Then, perhaps, they would collect berries. By fall, they would go back to the corn patches to harvest their crops. Then, in winter, it was off to the hunting grounds.

Because they had to move around so much, the Ojibwa developed some ingenious methods of transportation. Whatever way they travelled, they had to think about the country they were going through and the climate.

The birchbark canoe was a good way to travel during the summer. It was light, but very sturdy. The Ojibwa could travel easily across the thousands of lakes and rivers of the land they lived in.

So well designed was the Ojibwa canoe that the one we use today is almost the same. The only difference is that we use a more sturdy type of covering than birch bark.

A birch bark container.

In winter, when the lakes and rivers were frozen, the Ojibwa used snowshoes. Snowshoes allowed them to walk easily on top of the snow, rather than sinking into it. To carry their possessions on, the Ojibwa invented the toboggan, which we still use today.

Since they were on the move so much, the Ojibwa's houses, too, had to be highly portable. For that reason, they had to be built very simply. Not for them the elaborate, 12-metre high house of the Haida, or even the longhouses of the Huron.

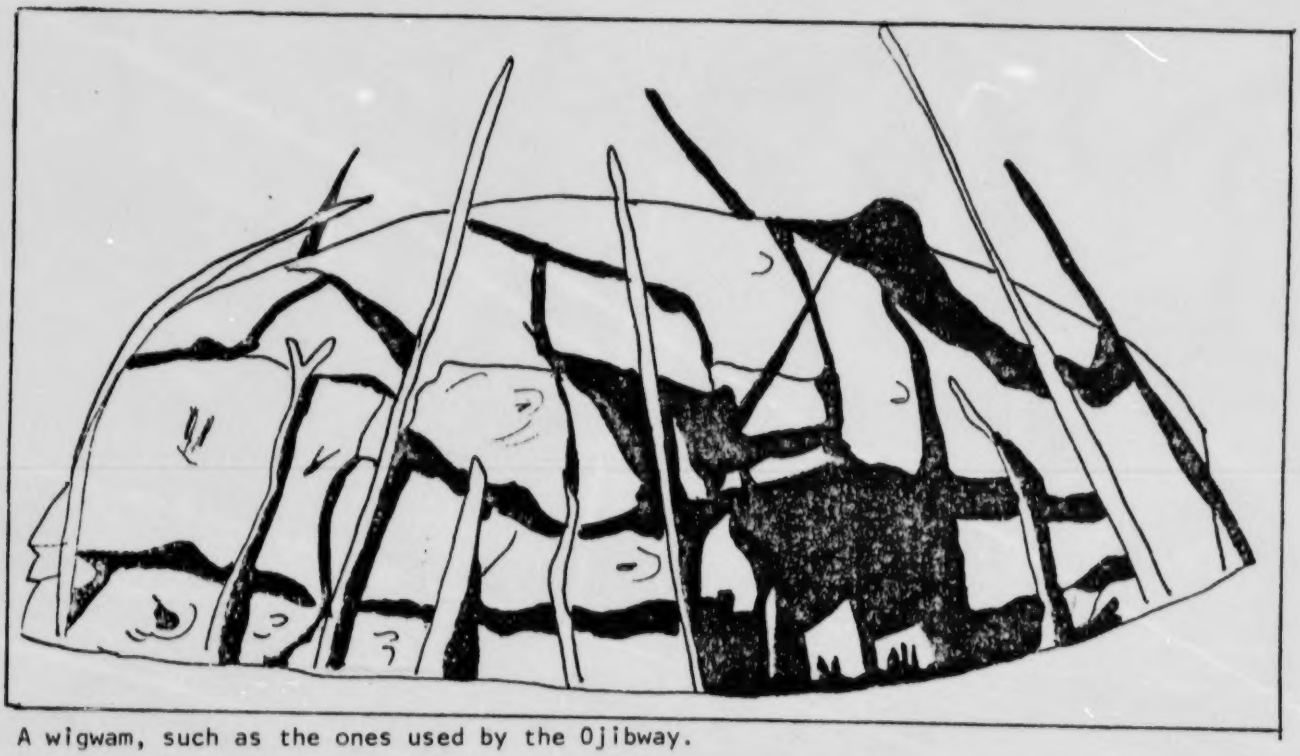
Their major dwelling was the wigwam. It was made of a frame of poles, with bark or skins stretched over top. Most wigwams were shaped like domes. But some were conical. Others were wedge-shaped.

When the Ojibwa moved, they usually

left the tent poles in place. Wood was easy to find, and they could always cut new poles at their next campsite.

Most of the time, the Ojibwa travelled in small knots of people. In the winter, they split up into family groups, which might include a mother and father, their children and the father's parents. In the spring, the families came together to form bands. Some bands were quite small, perhaps a few related families. Others were as large as several hundred people.

The principal idea of the Midewewin was that life is made longer by good living and the use of herbs intended for this purpose by the Mide Manido (Grand Medecine Spirit). The Medewewin taught that good conduct produced long life, and that evil reacted upon the offender. Members were taught to be moderate in speech, quiet in manner and not hasty in action. Lying, stealing and the use of liquor were strictly forbidden. Respect towards the Midewewin and towards the women were particularly stressed. Old people who were trained in the Midewewin were noted for their gentle voices, patience and courtesy.



A wigwam, such as the ones used by the Ojibway.

Each band and family was quite independent. There was no formal government, and no chiefs or council of chiefs. However, as with most North American Indian groups, the wisest or most experienced men usually provided leadership.

Although the Ojibwa had no formal government, they did have one organization which unified the various bands. This was the Midewewin or Grand Medecine Society. The Midewewin was a religious organization which was devoted to healing the sick and teaching its members the right way to live.

Membership in the Midewewin was open to both sexes, and was divided into four grades. Each grade required a long period of instruction, and the payment of heavy fees. Only a few people ever reached the top grade.

The members, called mede, were the doctors of their communities. They knew many herbal remedies to cure disease,

and were instructed in religious ritual and dealing with the spirit world.

The Ojibwa survived the coming of the white men better than most of the tribes in Canada. There were several reasons for this.

The first reason was that they suffered fewer epidemics of disease than most tribes. In other parts of Canada, whole tribes were almost wiped out by epidemics of smallpox, measles and influenza. The Ojibwa were not, perhaps because they saw few white men who spread the diseases, and perhaps also because they were more spaced out across their territory, so that diseases did not spread among them as easily as they would among a large encampment.

A second reason why the Ojibwa fared better was that they were able to keep their land and their traditional life style almost to the present time. Even today, many Ojibwa in the north still live by hunting, fishing and trapping.

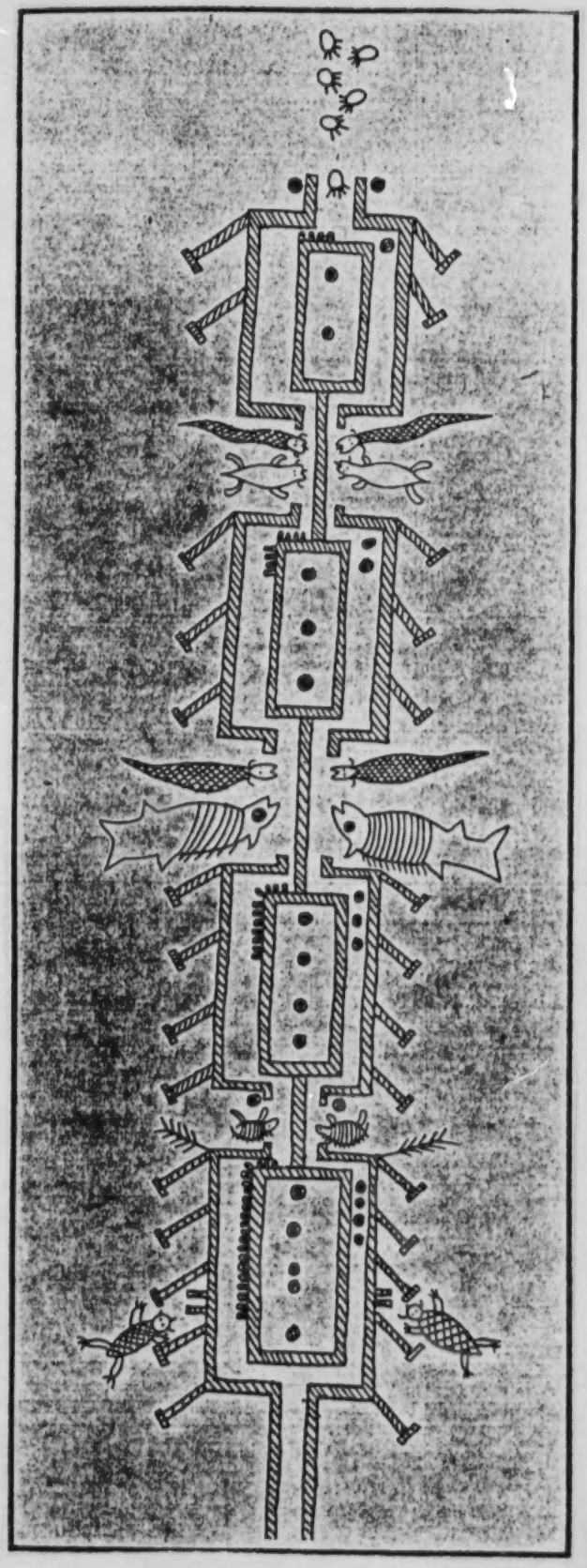
The land that the Ojibwa lived on in the north was not good for farming. Therefore, it did not interest the white men, and no one tried to push them off their land.

In southern Ontario, the situation was different. There the land was good for farming, and so it was taken away from the Ojibwa. They were obliged to turn to farming or to other means of supporting themselves, such as making crafts for sale.

But even in the south, the Ojibwa fared better than most tribes. Again, there were probably two reasons for this.

The first was that, for some reason, the Ojibwa were more popular and better liked by the white men than most Indian tribes. White settlers who met them wrote about their pleasant nature, their good sense of humour and their dignity.

A second factor which helped the Ojibwa to adjust themselves to white settlement was that they had help from their own people. A certain number of Ojibwa were educated by the Methodist missionaries. These people became missionaries and teachers to their own people, and helped them by



A Midewiwin scroll.

providing leadership at a time when the Ojibwa were trying to get used to white culture. These leaders fought for their people's rights with the government officials, and taught them new ways of making a living when settlers filled the land so that they could no longer hunt or fish.

The Ojibwa in southern Ontario had to adjust to an incredible migration of white settlers within a very few years. In 1791, there were 14,000 settlers in Upper Canada. By 1812, there were 90,000 settlers, and by 1838, the population was 400,000. Without their leaders' help, it is likely that the Ojibwa would have suffered from the migration much more than they did.

There were a number of these Ojibwa leaders. Some of the most famous were Peter Jones (Kah-kew-a-quon-aby), George Copway (Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh), Peter Jacobs (Pah-tah-se-ga), John Sunday and Henry Steinhauer. One of the most interesting of these men was Peter Jones.

Peter Jones was the son of a Welsh surveyor, Augustus Jones, and a Mississauga Ojibwa woman. When he was young, he lived with his mother's people. When he was 14, he went to live with his father. His father sent him to school, where he learned to read and write. Finally, he became a Methodist missionary.

Peter Jones was to spend 35 years of his life working for his people.

He made many trips to Toronto to argue with the government officials there over his people's rights. He also made several tours to England where he spoke to audiences about the plight of his people.

He translated a number of books of the Bible into Ojibwa, as well as many hymns, thus allowing his people to read these in their own language.

He helped to set up schools in which the children were instructed in their own language and in English. These schools gave many young Indians the education which allowed them to become successful in white society.

He wrote a history of the Ojibwa people, which recorded many of the traditions he had learned as a boy and informed the white society of the value of Ojibwa culture.

Throughout, he continued to live with his people teaching them about their rights and helping them to make an adjustment to white society. When he died in 1856, his funeral was attended by many friends, both white and Indian.

Certainly Peter Jones and the other men like him could not solve all the Ojibwa's problems. Like many people, they believed that the Indian way was dying, and that the future lay in following the white man's ways. Perhaps their belief helped to make this come true. Nevertheless, they helped greatly to ease the change.

They understood both the white and Indian ways of life, and were able to provide an example of how the two could be brought together. They gave the Ojibwa a head start in adapting to white society, which has continued to help them to this day.

The Ojibwa are one of the largest groups of Indians in Canada: there are 51,000. Only the Cree, with 70,000 have more people.

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Indians of the Pacific Coast

The people of the Pacific Coast were fortunate in many ways. Their home was one of the richest areas in North America. The climate was very mild. And there were trees, especially the cedar, which grew to enormous size.

In this land of natural plenty, with almost all of their basic needs supplied, the people of the Pacific Coast were able to develop a rich and varied culture.

The sea provided them with more food than they could possibly use. There were clams, mussels and other shellfish; cod and halibut; and candlefish or *oolachen*, so rich in oil that they could be used as candles as well as for food.

Most important of all, there were salmon, which swarmed up the river to breed in such numbers that, as one explorer exclaimed, "You could walk across their b
backs." And farther out, there were whales to catch, as well as other sea mammals, such as hair seals, sea lions and sea otters.

From the land came such foods as nettle roots, berries, gull eggs, and a kind of edible clover, which some of the tribes grew.

With so many kinds of foods to eat, the people of the Pacific Coast did not have to worry about starvation. They did not have to travel far to find food. They had time to spend on other things, especially

Haida-style drawings of a goat (above) and an eagle.

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The map shows the areas in which the Indians of the Pacific Coast lived.

on art, which they had developed to a very high level.

The climate was good. A current of warm water ran along the shore, warming the winds which blew across the land. Rainfall was heavy, because on one side was the sea; on the other, the mountains.

The warm, damp climate encouraged growth of trees. From the trees, the people were able to supply almost all their non-food needs. Cedar was the perfect wood for these people, who had only stone tools to work with. The wood was soft, but very firm. And it was the wood that grew in abundance on the Pacific Coast.

From cedar planks, the people were able to build houses forty metres high, large enough for ten or more families to live in. From cedar logs, the people made huge canoes, which they used to travel up and down the coast. The canoes were giants — up to 18 metres long, carrying

three metric tons of cargo, as well as 60 or 70 passengers.

The wood of the cedar was full of natural oils, which made it very long-lasting, even in the damp climate of the Pacific Coast. Some of the totem poles built from it have lasted over a hundred years.

When steamed, the cedar would bend without breaking. The people made boxes and cooking pots from it, moulding the wood to whatever shape they wanted.

They could even make clothes from the cedar bark, weaving the fibers into blankets and robes.

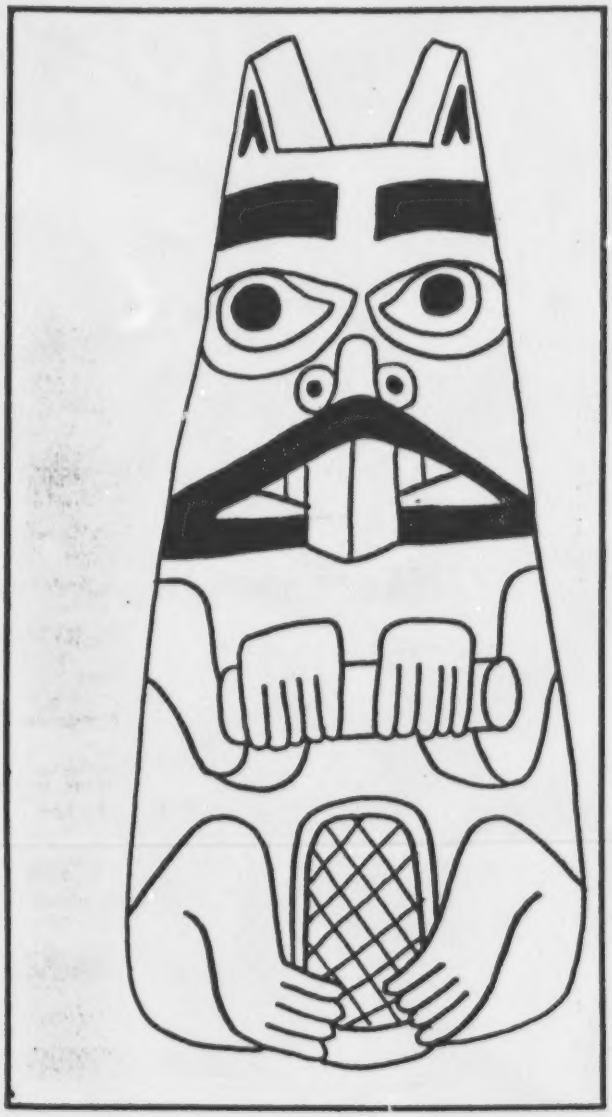
There were seven tribes of Indians living in this area between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Coast. They were the Tlingit, Tsimshian, Haida, Kwakiutl, Bella Coola, Nootka and Coast Salish. Let's now look at one tribe, the Haida, to see how the people lived.

The Haida

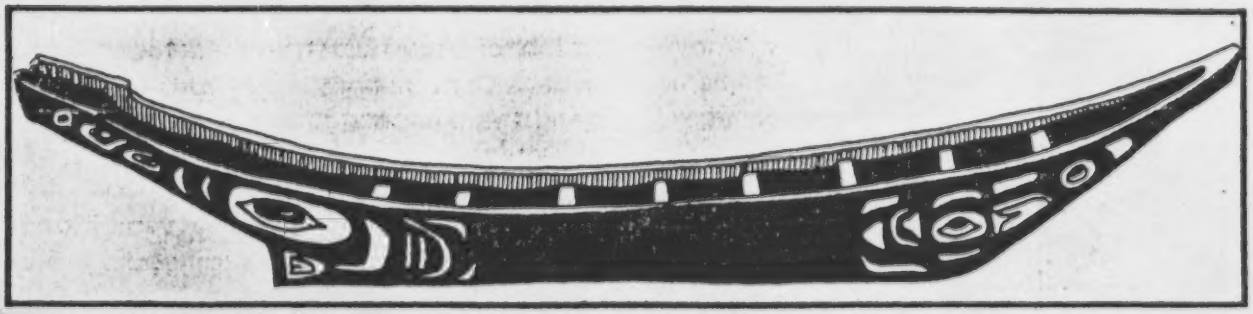
The Haida lived in northern areas, in small villages around the coasts of what are now called the Queen Charlotte Islands. On the west side were mountains, some of them as high as 1,219 metres, which sloped down to beautiful sandy beaches on parts of the east coast.

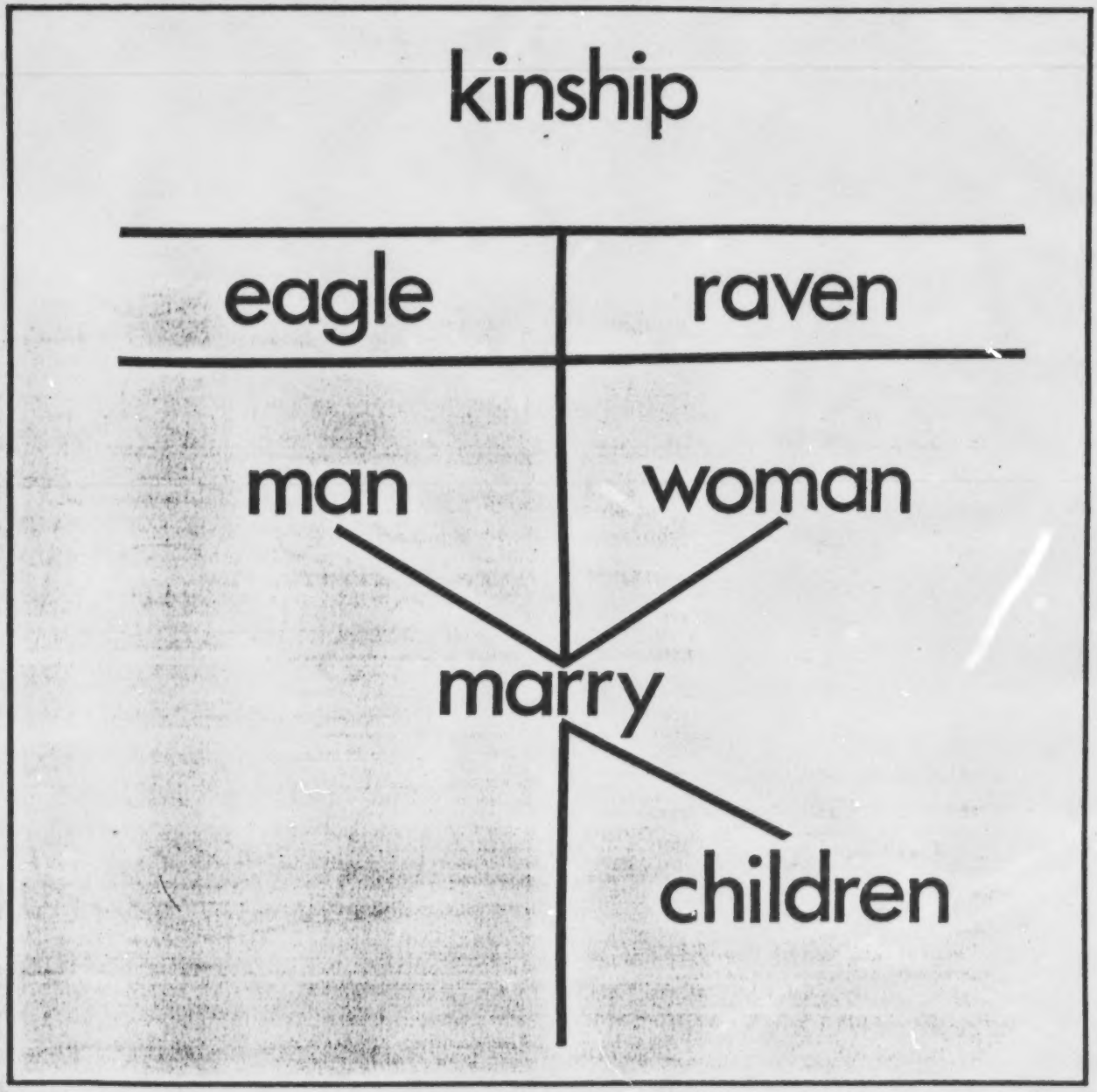
The Haida made up one of the largest tribes on the Pacific Coast, although there were never very many of them. Before the white men came, there were probably about 10,000 Haida. (Their neighbours, the Tlingit, had about 7,800 people; many of the other tribes had only three or four thousand people.)

Family relationships were very im-



The drawing at the top is the Haida version of a beaver. Below is a Haida canoe, made from cedar logs. The canoes were often 18 metres long, and could carry as many as 70 passengers!





portant to the Haida. Usually, their villages consisted of several large houses in which a number of related families lived together.

Everyone belonged to one of two clans. They were either Eagles or Ravens.

Children inherited their membership in a clan from their mothers. (The name for this type of inheritance is "matrilineage".) If a child's mother was a Raven and his father was an Eagle, the child became a Raven like his mother.

When a child grew up, he had to marry a person from the opposite clan. Ravens had to marry Eagles, and Eagles had to marry Ravens. No one could marry a person from the same clan.

To do so would have been considered shocking, like marrying your own brother or sister! Later, when the white men came, a Christian missionary did not understand the customs, and married two members of the Eagle clan. The Haida considered this a great scandal.

Each clan had its own traditions, symbols and history. A person could feel a great deal of pride in his background. If

a person ever needed any help, he knew he could call on his clan to support him. This social system gave the Haida a sense of security and belonging.

Within the clans, some people were more closely related than others. A group of closely related people were known as a "lineage". Usually, the people of one lineage lived together in one village.

Belonging to a lineage gave a Haida person many benefits, for each lineage owned the right to use certain hunting grounds, berry patches and fishing places. It also possessed ranks and titles, as well as important crests. A person who belonged to a certain lineage had the right to its crests on the front of his house.

Lineages were not all equal to each other. Some were more important and of higher rank than others.

From the highest ranking lineages came the overall chiefs of the Haida, men who had the right to a special title, such as "village owner". The chiefs were always men, although they inherited many of their titles from their mothers' lineage. From the lower lineages came the common people.

At the bottom of the social structure were the slaves. They were usually people from other tribes who had been captured in war.

The slaves were usually very well-treated by the Haida. Unlike the slaves which Europeans kept, Haida slaves did not work very hard. Sometimes their families could buy them back.

The Haida were very interested in rank, since this was the basis of their form of government. They wanted to know where each person stood in relation to everyone else, — who was of higher rank, and who was lower. In a way the Haida ranking system looked like an arithmetic problem.

A B C D...

No two people could be equal. Each person had his own place. And sometimes it was difficult to decide what each person's place was.

Stylized Haida drawings: a bear (top) and dogfish.

Stylized Haida drawings: Hawk (top) and wolf.

A person inherited the right to certain titles and degrees of status from his family, but this did not necessarily mean he could keep them. To make these titles and ranks his own, he had to prove that he was worthy of them.

The Haida developed a system known as the "potlatch" to do just that. A potlatch was a big gathering, to which the chief of a lineage invited the chief of another lineage and all his relatives. At this gathering, there was dancing and feasting. During the potlatch, the host gave huge amounts of food and valuable presents to all the guests.

He hoped to achieve two goals by doing this. First, he wanted the guests to see his wealth, energy and importance, and that of his lineage, so that everyone would accept his right to a high title. Second, he wanted the guests to remember the event which the potlatch was given to celebrate. (This was important because the only way an event was remembered was if people kept it in their minds; Haida society had no books or newspapers.)

Potlatches were held for other reasons as well. Sometimes they were held to celebrate the raising of a new totem pole or the building of a new house. Sometimes they were held if something very shameful had happened to a member of the lineage: if he were captured and made a slave by another tribe. Then a potlatch was held to wipe out the shame this brought on the other members of the lineage.

Potlatches were a great deal of work for the members of a lineage. Often, the people worked for several years to gather together all the presents they needed to give away. Sometimes a lineage gave away almost everything they owned to make sure that their potlatch would be worth remembering. But the land was so rich that they were never poor for very long.

Besides the potlatch, the other thing that the Haida were famous for was their art. To be considered a great artist

was one of the highest achievements a Haida could wish for.

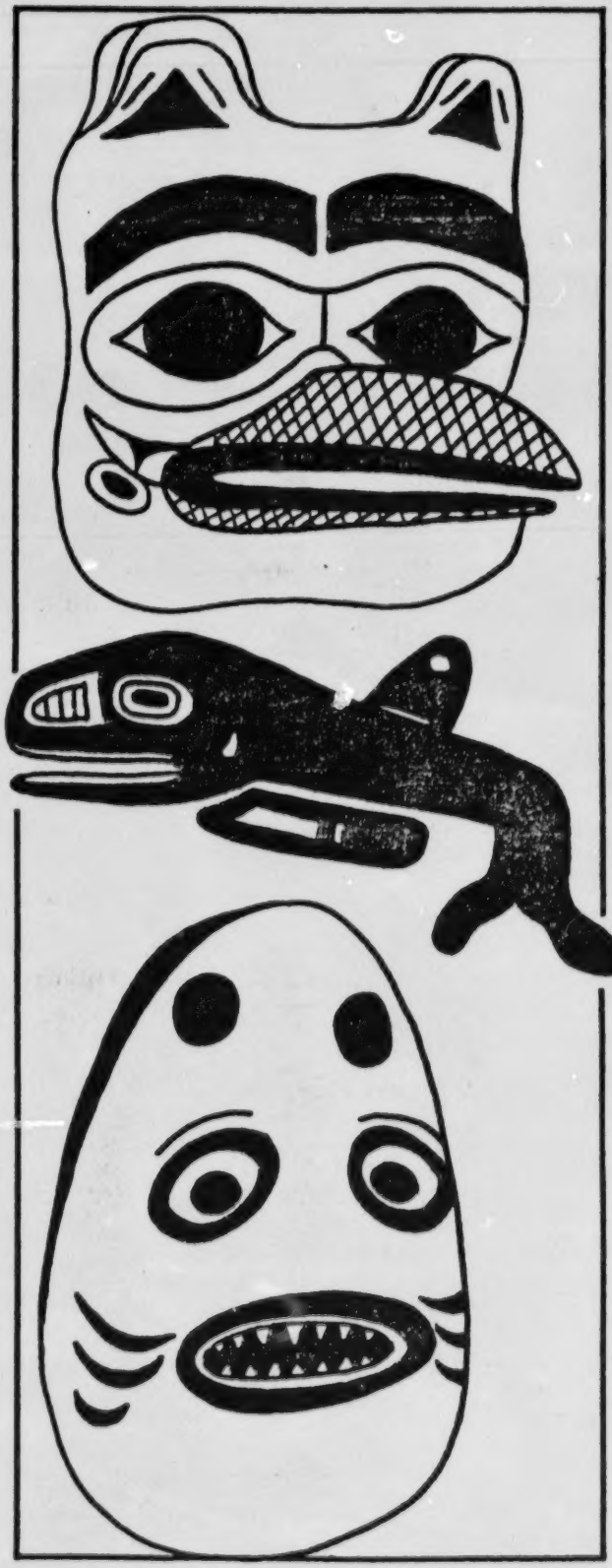
The Haida felt that everything, even everyday items like spoons and bowls, should be beautifully decorated, with carvings or paintings of spirits, animals and birds. Sometimes these were done in a life-like style, so that anyone looking at them could see at a glance what animal the artist was thinking of.

But often, the artists preferred to work in a more abstract style, which was very beautiful, but which made it harder for a person to tell. Then, the observer had to know the clues which would tell him the answer. For example, a beaver could be recognized because his scaly tail and large front teeth were always included in the design. An eagle was always shown with his curving beak. A bear was indicated by his big paws with long curving claws. Of course, all the Haida knew these clues, so they could appreciate how the artists had taken these traditional designs and out of them made something new and different.

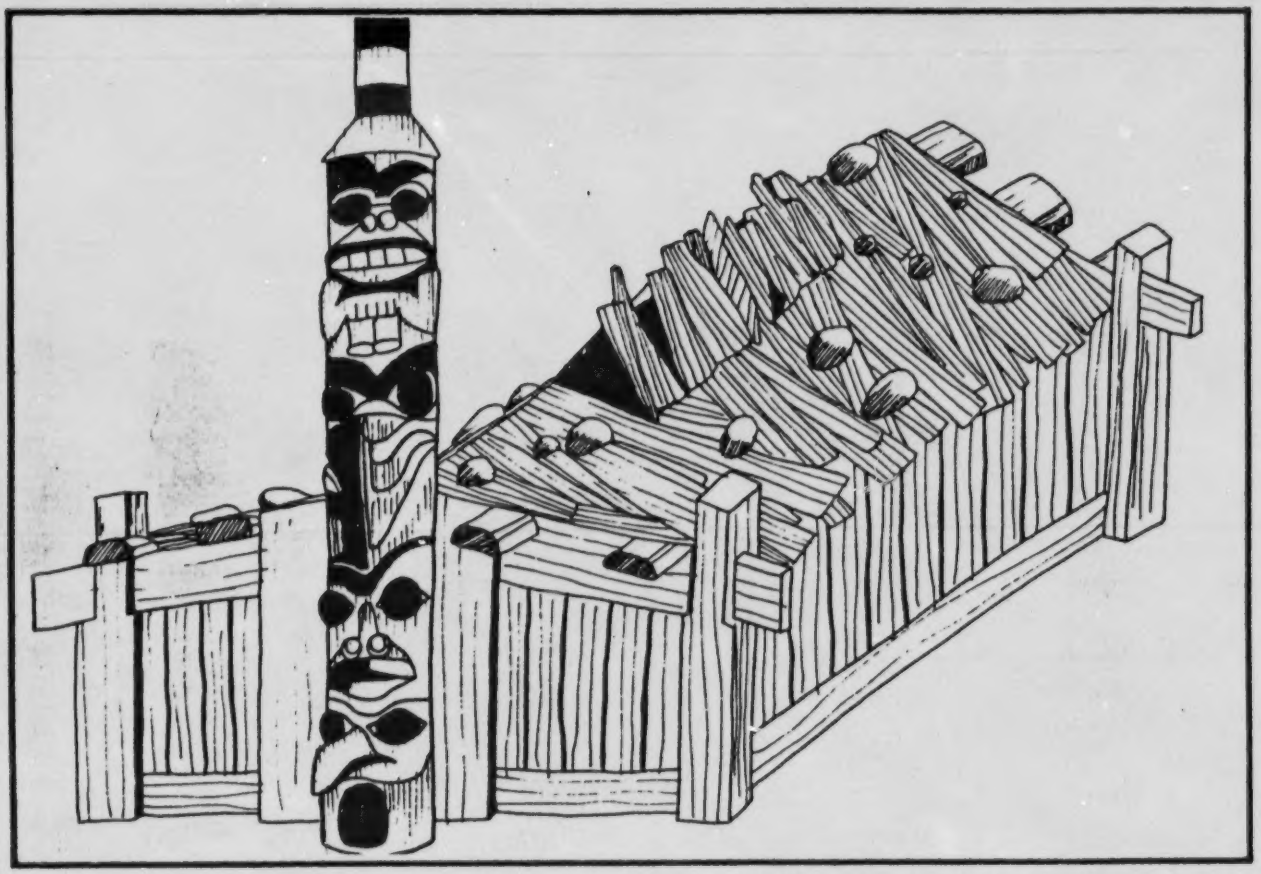
The Haida decorated almost everything around them with these designs: not only the small things, but also their houses, their canoes, and most famous of all, their totem poles.

The totem poles have become the trademark of the Pacific Coast. They are one of the first things that anyone thinks of when the word "Indians" is mentioned. Many people are confused and think that all Indians made totem poles. This is not true: only on the Pacific Coast did Indians carve totem poles.

The Haida were very fond of totem poles and were some of the best carvers on the Pacific Coast. Even today there are still many totem poles standing in the villages the Haida once lived in.



Stylized Haida drawings: Raven (top), whale (middle) and shark (bottom).



A Haida totem pole stands in front of a house. The Haida used totem poles to display family crests and tell people which lineage the family belonged to.

No one knows exactly when the Haida first began to make totem poles. Edensaw, one of the great Haida carvers, told this story about the beginning of totem poles.

> Many years ago, the Haida lived in cold and comfortless huts, without columns or any such things outside their dwellings. One day a chief, who seems to have been of more than ordinary intelligence, set himself to devise a more comfortable style of house.
>
> While he was thinking over a plan, a spirit appeared to him, and showed him the style of a house with the measurements and every other detail complete except that there was no carved column (totem pole).
>
> The chief and his tribe set to work and gathered together the material they needed. Just as they were about to build, the spirit appeared to the chief again. The spirit showed him the same plan, but with this difference; in front of the house was placed a carved column, with his crest (a Raven) carved on top. Underneath the Raven was a second carving, the crest of his wife, an Eagle. The spirit told the chief that all the people in every village were to build houses the same, and to set up columns.

Probably the Haida began to use totem poles in much the way that is described in this story.

Totem poles were placed in front

of the houses to display the family crests, This told others which lineage the people who lived there belonged to. Perhaps they first began as crests painted on the outside of the house, or carved into the poles and beams supporting the house. It was only later that they became free-standing.

At first, only the wealthiest of chiefs could afford totem poles. Using stone tools, it took a lot of time and labour to carve them. However, when the white men came, they brought iron tools which made carving much easier. Soon almost every house had at least one totem pole, and some had two or three.

The first white men to come to the land of the Haida were Russians, who arrived between 1745 and 1762. The British and Americans followed soon after.

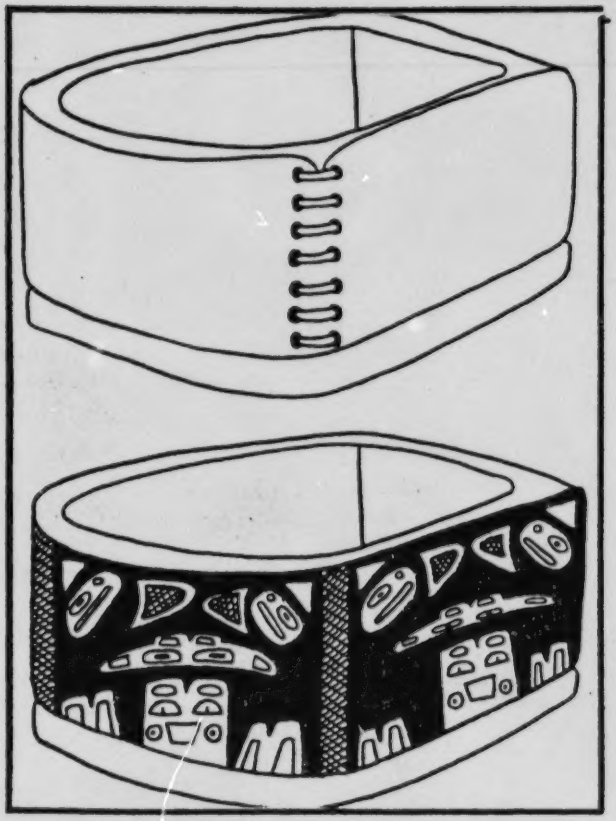
The Europeans were anxious to trade with the Haida for the fur of the sea otter. These animals lived off the shores of the Queen Charlotte Islands, and had beautiful pelts, with long silky black hair tipped with silver. The Haida had always trapped them, for their fur was made into cloaks which only the highest chiefs could wear. The Europeans traded their iron tools for these pelts.

Then they took them to China, where sea otter pelts were considered immensely valuable. In China, the Europeans sold the sea otter pelts in return for Chinese tea, silk and porcelain, which they then took back to Europe and sold for immense profits.

Thus, the Haida were part of a three way trade route which went around the world.

The trade made huge fortunes for the white traders. The Haida themselves got very little of this wealth.

The fur trade went on for a number of years, until there were almost no more sea otters. Then instead of furs, the Haida began to grow potatoes, which the Europeans had introduced to them. These they traded with other tribes for oolachen grease and other goods they needed.



Modern Haida art. This is a drawing of a bracelet made by a contemporary Haida artist.

If the Haida had been left alone at this time, their rich culture might have survived. However, the influence of the white man became stronger and stronger, and because of it, the culture of the Haida began to die.

A Christian missionary arrived in 1876, and told the people they must stop building totem poles, threatening them with jail if they did not obey. He also told the people they must live in European style houses and not in the huge decorated houses which held many families. The missionary believed that the old customs of the Haida were "heathen" practices, which must be stopped because God would not approve of them.

In 1884, the government passed a law forbidding anyone to either hold or attend a potlatch. The government disap-

proved of potlatching because the people were very poor after giving one. The law forbidding potlatching was very damaging to Haida culture, because the potlatch was the basis of their whole system of government. Many Haida continued to hold potlatches, but they had to do so in secret because they were breaking the law.

Finally, after years of complaints by both Indians and non-Indians, the government changed the law. In 1951, the law against potlatches was removed from the Indian Act so that the Haida could again continue their old customs in peace.

The Haida had many other difficulties after the white men came. They suffered from several epidemics of disease, both influenza and smallpox, which killed large numbers of the people. The white men moved out to their islands, and took away much of their land. Their young people were sent away to schools, and began to forget both the language and the old customs of the Haida.

Before the white men came, there were almost 9,800 Haida. By 1930, there were only two villages left with only 650 Haida in all.

Now the population of the Haida is growing again. In 1970, there were 1,367 people who spoke Haida. Most of them make their living by fishing and working in the lumber camps. Some young Haida are also beginning to return to working as artists. Using the old styles, they are beginning to create a new Haida art. It seems that this old and beautiful culture is beginning to rise again in new and modern forms.

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The Inuit

This Inuit woman is well-dressed for the harsh Arctic climate. Her trousers are made of caribou hide or bearskin, and she wears a warm parka. Many people have said Inuit clothing is so warm, it can be compared to a portable tent.

Across the top of Canada lies the Arctic, the "roof of the world". It stretches for 4827 kilometres, from Alaska in the west to Greenland and Labrador in the east, — an empty land of treeless plains called "tundra" and of icy polar seacoast.

This is the land of the Inuit, which means "the people". "Eskimo" is the name given to them by the Indians. It is an Algonkin word meaning "raw meat eaters". We will call them Inuit, because that is the name they prefer.

The Inuit have fascinated white scholars for hundreds of years. Europeans, who lived in more moderate climates, have marvelled at the ability of the Inuit to live in the cold and ice of the Arctic. They asked themselves where the Inuit came from, and

The map shows the location of the various groups of Inuit.

how they learned to live this way. Today we are fairly sure of the answer.

The Inuit came from northeast Asia, and are related to the Chuckchi and Koryak of Siberia. These peoples share many customs in common with the Inuit, such as round snow houses, detachable harpoon heads, soapstone lamps, and the moon-shaped knife.

The Inuit were probably already used to an Arctic life before they came to Canada. They arrived in North America much later than the Indians, crossing the Bering Strait about 3,000 years ago.

From Alaska, where they landed, they gradually spread out across the Arctic, finally reaching Greenland about 1200 a.d. Because the Inuit were such comparatively recent arrivers, they have not had much time to develop differences from each other. Although they are spread out across 5,000 kilometres, the Inuit have kept a common language, and similar culture.

The climate of the Arctic is one of the harshest in the world. The temperature is very cold, although not as cold as we might think. About -46°C is average for much of the coastline in winter. The summers in the Arctic are cool, but not cold: about 10°C is an average temperature.

The Inuit have learned how to keep warm in their cold climate. Their clothes provide them with almost complete protection.

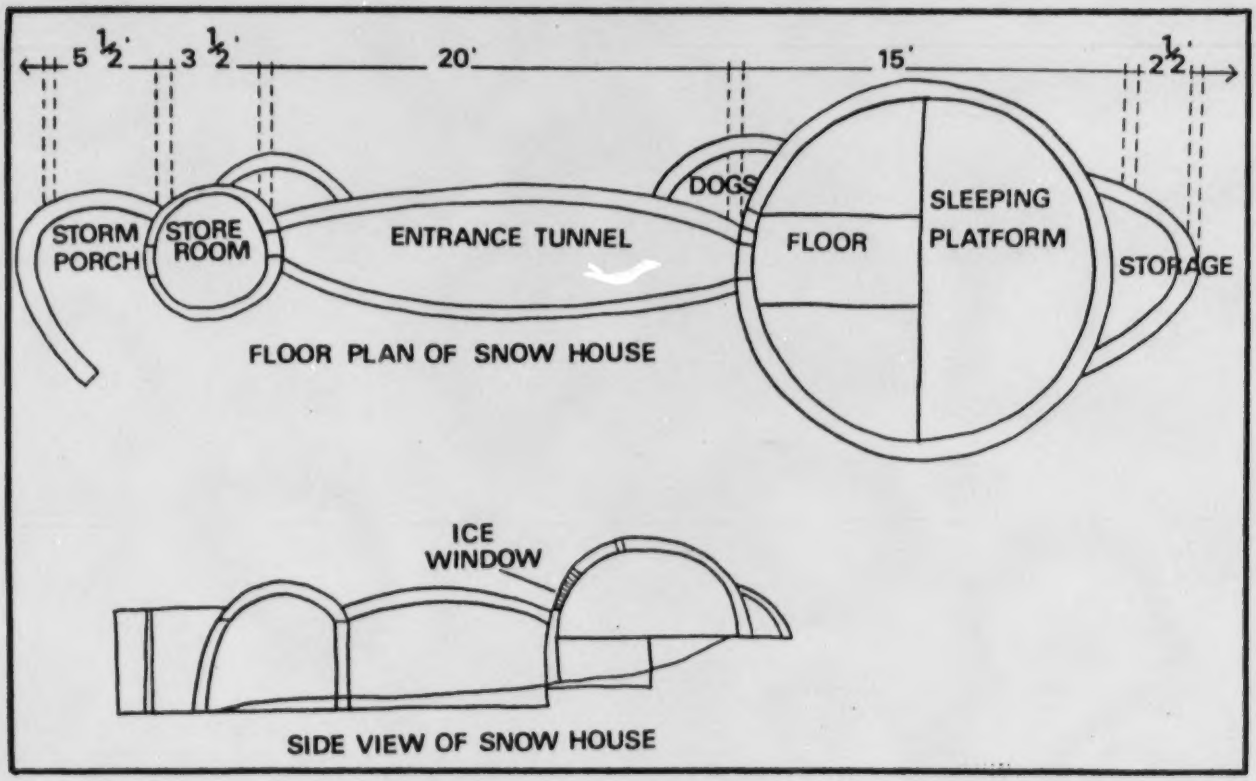
Indeed, their problem is how to keep from becoming too hot. If they sweat, the moisture may stay in their clothes and freeze, making the clothes stiff and uncomfortable.

Across the Arctic, the Inuit used more or less the same style of clothing, although it varied depending on what kinds of furs were available. Both men and women wore boots of sealskin, called *Kamiks*, which reached up their legs to the knees. Above these, they wore trousers of caribou hide or bearskin. Over all, they wore large roomy parkas with the hair side turned outwards. Men's parkas were cut straight at the bottom, while women's parkas had a

Here are two Inuit men dressed for winter. Note the sealskin *Kamiks* on their feet, which reach up to their knees. The men's parkas are different from the women's. Can you tell the difference?

long tail hanging down the back and a roomy hood in which they carried their babies. Under their parkas, the Inuit wore a light shirt of hide or of birdskin with the feathers against the skin. If it were very cold, they wore a second parka with the fur facing in.

The Inuit clothing was so warm that it has often been compared to a portable tent. When they were travelling,



they often did not bother to build a house, nor did they need sleeping bags. They simply slept out in their warm clothes.

Sometimes however, they had difficulty keeping their hands and feet warm. If their boots became wet, or the person had to take his mittens off, then he ran the danger of getting frostbitten.

The Inuit also built strong houses, which kept them warm in winter. Indeed, they were so warm that it was customary for everyone, both adults and children, to wear little or no clothing when they were indoors.

Most people, when they think of Inuit houses think of the *igloo* or snow-house. Actually, the igloo was the main winter home only in the central Arctic.

In the eastern areas, the snow house was used only as a temporary shelter when travelling. In the western Arctic, it was not used at all. The winter home in these areas was built of stone walls, with a roof of driftwood covered with skins or turf.

Whether the house was made of snow or of stone, the design was similar. Houses were round, and almost half of the house was taken up by a large raised platform which was used for sleeping and sitting on. The houses usually had a long entrance tunnel which prevented cold air from blowing into the house, and which was used for storage. Heat in the house was provided by a stone lamp which burned fat, and by the bodies of the people.

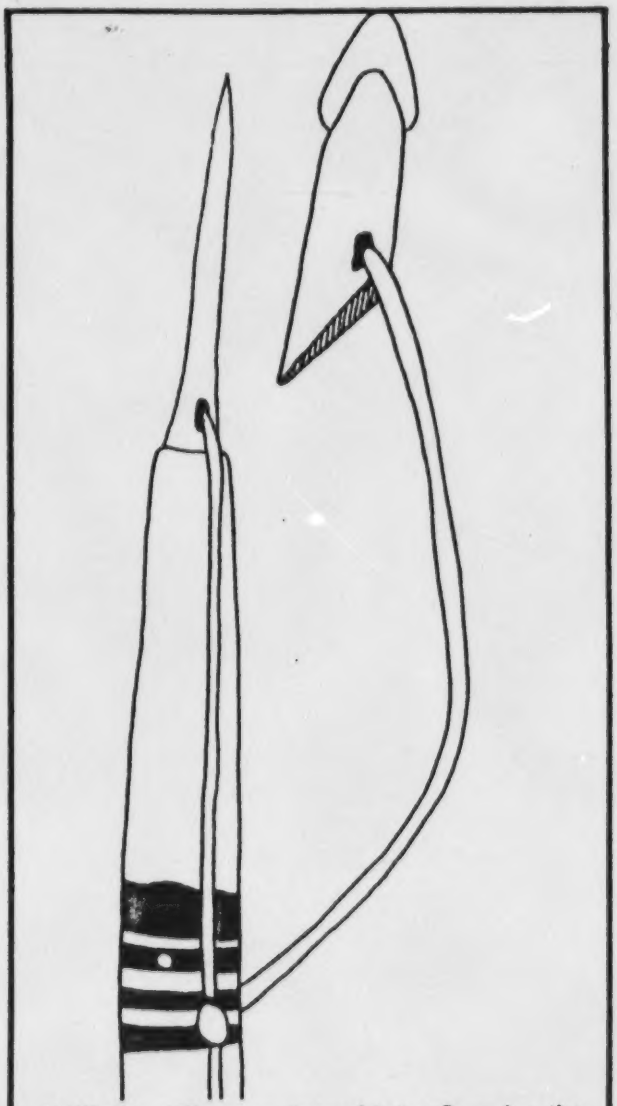
In summer, the cold was not a problem and the people lived in skin tents. They much preferred the open airy tent to the closed houses, and stayed in the tents until the cold forced them to move into their winter homes.

The Inuit were very skilled in making and using tools. They had many different kinds of tools for special purposes. Just to list them all would require several pages. There were many kinds of spears and harpoons for hunting different animals, fish and birds; special knives for skinning animals, for working bone and ivory, for building snow houses, or for general purposes. There were also chisels, saws, drills, needles, needlecases, and so

on. All of these were carefully carved from wood, bone, ivory or stone and held together with pegs and sinews. It was partly the Inuit's skill and creativeness in making whatever tools they needed which allowed them to keep on living in the difficult conditions of the Arctic.

Most of the Inuit in Canada lived along the coast. Only a few preferred to live inland. The sea provided more animals for food than did the inland plains.

The Inuit specialized in hunting the sea mammals: the walrus and whale, and especially the seal.



Until the rifle was brought to Canada, the harpoon (pictured above) was one of the most important weapons the Inuit had.

In winter, seals were hunted through a hole in the ice. The seal must breathe air, so it keeps several holes in the ice open. The Inuit hunter found one of these holes, and waited beside it until the seal came up to breathe. When the marker which he had placed in the water began to bob, the hunter struck quickly with his harpoon. Hunting seals in this way took a great deal of patience. Often the hunter waited for many hours. Even then, there was a chance that he would miss the seal.

In the spring, the seals were hunted in a different way. When the sun began to shine, the seals liked to lie on the ice and bask in the warmth. Then the hunters stalked them, very slowly so as not to alarm the seals.

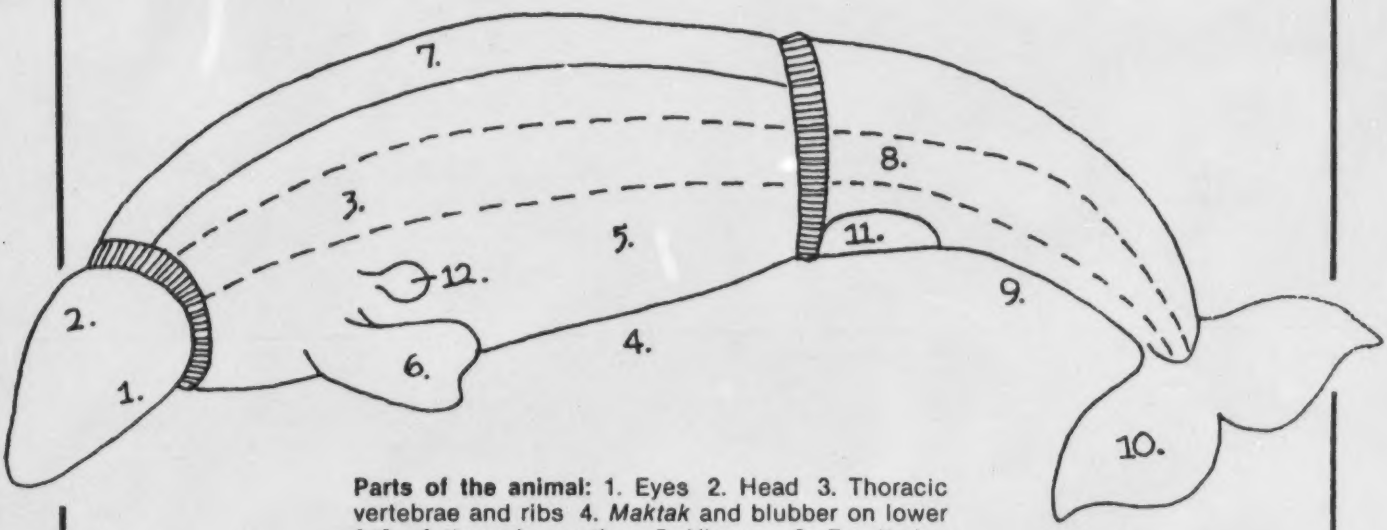
Before the white men came, the hunters had to come close enough to reach the seals with their harpoons. Now that the Inuit have rifles, it is much easier. The rifle can shoot over a long distance, so the hunters do not have to come as close.

Seals were hunted by a single hunter. Walrus and whales, being larger, were hunted by groups of men. Whales were especially dangerous to hunt, but worth it because the meat from one whale provided food for a village for many weeks.

Whales were hunted from a *umiak*, a large open boat. The hunters paddled up close to the whale and harpooned it. If possible, they also tried to cut the muscles in its flippers so that the whale could not strike out at the boat. When the whale dived, the harpoon stayed in its skin. Attached to the harpoon were air-filled floats, which prevented the whale from swimming and tired it out. When the whale was exhausted and came to the surface, the hunters killed it.

In the summer, the Inuit moved inland to hunt the caribou. These reindeer-

The Sharing of Food



Parts of the animal: 1. Eyes 2. Head 3. Thoracic vertebrae and ribs 4. *Maktak* and blubber on lower 2/3 of thoracic section 5. Viscera 6. Forelimbs, 7. *Maktak* and blubber of upper 1/3 of thoracic section 8. Lumbar, sacral and caudal vertebrae 9. *Maktak* and blubber of rear section 10. Flukes 11. Cloaca 12. Heart

A. *Qilalugak* (White whale)

1. Dogs 2. Men 3. Everyone in the settlement 4. Women 5. Dogs of the hunter(s) who killed it 6. Everyone 7. Hunter's household 8. Women 9. Hunter who killed it 10. Everyone 11. Dogs 12. Men

B. *Aivirk (Walrus)*

The walrus was cut up and distributed in the same manner as the white whale, except for the skin. The skin of the walrus was not highly valued and was distributed for dog food among all those in the camp.

C. *Natsiq, Qairulik, Ujjuk,* (Seals)*

Head, eyes, forelimbs, thoractic vertebrae, and heart ..... Women
Cervical and lumbar vertebrae ..... Men
Ribs, sternum, and attached meat ..... Hunter who killed it
Lumbar meat ..... Men in the hunting party
Sacral and caudal vertebrae, hind flippers ..... Cooked in broth and eaten by all
The skin goes to the successful hunter and his party.

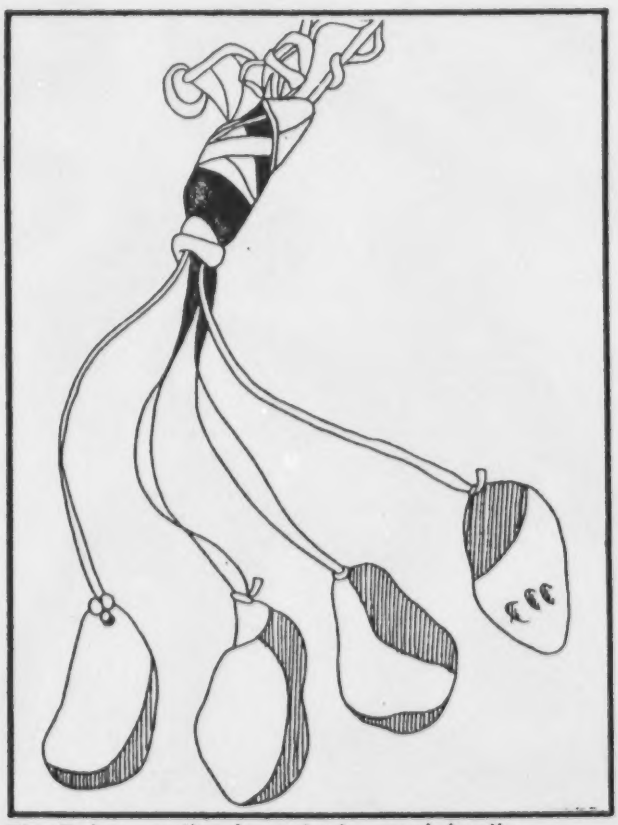
*Slight differences among the three seals have been ignored.

like animals migrated to the north in vast herds every summer.

The caribou were hunted by groups of men. The hunters in their *kayaks* harpooned them while they were swimming across rivers. If there were no rivers nearby, the hunters drove them into corrals and shot them with bows and arrows.

The yearly caribou hunt was very important to the Inuit. As well as being a good source of meat, the caribou skins made clothing which was light, warm and long-lasting.

Besides the sea-mammals and caribou, the Inuit had many other sources of food. They made use of almost everything the land could offer. They caught several kinds of fish, including salmon, char and whitefish. They hunted birds, using *bolas* which wrapped around the birds' wings and made them fall to the ground. They took eggs from the birds' nests, and hunted smaller mammals such as rabbits.



The Bolas, another important — and deadly — weapon. The Inuit used them to hunt birds.

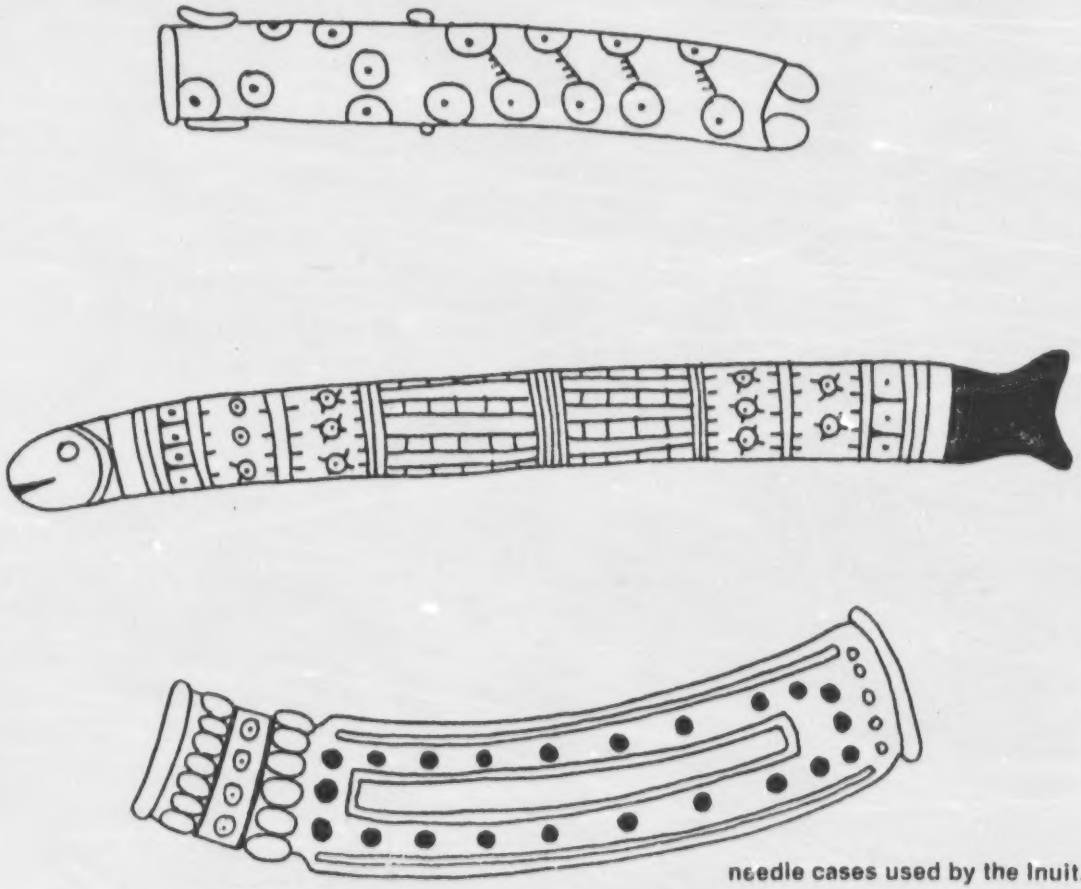
Most dangerous of all the animals they hunted was the polar bear, which they valued not only for its meat and skin, but also as a test of their skill as hunters. Most Inuit dogs were trained to hunt the bears. When a bear was sighted, the dogs were released to chase and corner it. While the bear was occupied with the dogs snapping at its heels, the hunter moved up and harpooned it. However, many Inuit men were injured or killed trying to kill the bears.

Although the Inuit had many sources of meat, they seldom ate vegetable foods. Occasionally, they ate plants in raw form, such as seaweed or berries. Their most common source of vegetables was the partially digested contents of the caribou's stomach: the caribou lived on lichens.

Whether game was hunted in groups or by a single hunter, it was always divided up among all the people in the group. No hunter kept everything he caught unless the game was so small that it was not worth dividing up. The hunter was expected to share his kill.

When a kill was made, the animal was usually brought to a respected person in the group to be divided. The hunter did not do this himself. The sharing was done by very definite rules, so that no one could feel jealous or cheated.

Sharing was a very important part of Inuit culture. Why was this so? Sharing was important to the survival of the group as a whole. No matter how good a hunter was, there were always times when he had little success. Then his family might go hungry. Also, as in any group, some people were better at doing certain things than others. Some men were better hunters than others. In a land of plenty, a man might be a poorer hunter and still manage to provide for himself and his family. In the Arctic, there was a very thin line between survival and starvation. Sharing eliminated the difference between the skilled and the less skilled hunter. Sharing made certain that as long as there was any food available, no one would go hungry.



needle cases used by the Inuit.

Sharing was important not only in food. Many other possessions were shared as well. Often a person who wanted something simply took it, without asking for permission. The person who owned the object did not mind, for he knew that the other person would not have taken it unless he needed it. The lender knew that he was welcome to borrow anything that belonged to the other person as well. Usually the borrowed object was returned sooner or later, but there was no time limit on borrowing or pressure to return things.

This custom of borrowing often brought problems when white men began to live among the Inuit. If an Inuit man took a gun to hunt for food which he needed, the white men accused him of stealing and called the police. The Inuit did not understand this accusation. To them only a mean and selfish person would refuse to share with others.

Sharing even extended to wives and children. Children were much loved by the Inuit, and everyone felt sorry for the man and woman who could not have children. As a result, a couple who had several children often gave one of their own children to be adopted by a childless couple. Inuit men also shared their wives with other men.

Women's work was very important in the Arctic, and a hunter who did not have a woman to care for him faced much difficulty. For example, only the women knew how to make the warm and weatherproof clothing which protected the hunter in the Arctic. Although a man might do

some mending if his clothes were torn on a hunting trip, he did not know how to make a new suit. Therefore, if a man came to visit a friend and left his wife behind, it was customary for his friend to lend him his wife to take care of him while he was there.

The Inuit did not share with anyone who came along. Indeed, if a stranger arrived in their camp and was not known to anyone in the group, he was liable to be considered an enemy and killed on the spot. If the stranger could establish friendly ties with the people, or show that he was related to someone in the group, he would be treated with great hospitality.

Family relationships were very important to the Inuit. It was considered a good thing to have as many relatives as possible, because a person could always count on his relatives for help. Thus, a man tried to marry a woman from another family, so that he could add her relatives to his own. The Inuit had no rules against marrying a cousin or even a brother or sister, but it was considered a stupid thing to do. A person did not get more relatives that way.

Family ties were important because there was no formal government or tribal structure. The Inuit tended to live together as small bands of related people. They were not conscious of an overall political or tribal unity. Nor did they have any tribal government. Leadership was provided by the wisest man in the group, or by the best hunter, and not by an elected or hereditary chief. The band as a whole made any important decisions.

Inuit society was governed by a complex set of rules which told the people what was right or wrong. Many of these rules related to the behaviour of people towards each other. Many more related to the animals they depended on for food.

The Inuit believed that each animal had a spirit. If its spirit were offended, it communicated with the spirit of all the other animals of its species and they refused to allow themselves to be caught.

Special charms and ceremonies had to be observed by the hunter in order to persuade the animal to come to him. Further correct behaviour had to be observed when the animal was killed. All sea mammals were offered a drink of fresh water when they were killed. The Inuit believed that sea mammals were always thirsty because they lived in salt water. Thus, an Inuit hunter kept a mitten full of snow next to his body, so that it would melt and he would have fresh water ready to offer the animal.

Through rules such as these, the Inuit tried to control events which man had little control over. For example, catching a seal is mainly a matter of luck and hunting skill. But the Inuit life was so risky, and the catching of a seal so important, that they did not want to rely on only luck and skill. Charms, ceremonies and appeals to the supernatural might provide the little bit of help that meant the difference between success and failure.

The Inuit Meet the White Men

The Inuit have been in contact with the white men for a long time. It is possible that the first white men they saw were the Norse Vikings who occasionally made trips to North America. Certainly the Inuit in Greenland knew the Norsemen, for the Norse had colonies there for many years.

After 1500 A.D., other European explorers travelled through the Arctic, searching for a northwest passage to China and the riches of the East. This was what Henry Hudson was doing when he discovered Hudson's Bay. (Of course, the Inuit and Indians had known it was there all along.)

In the 18th and 19th centuries, whalers often visited the shores of the Arctic. They were hunting for whales, which were prized in Europe for their oil and bones. Sometimes, the sailors from the

whaling or exploration ships met the Inuit and traded with them. Sometimes, the Inuit killed these strangers who brought foreign diseases with them and tried to kidnap their women and young men to work on board the ships. Contacts between the Inuit and the ships went on for many years, but were occasional rather than frequent.

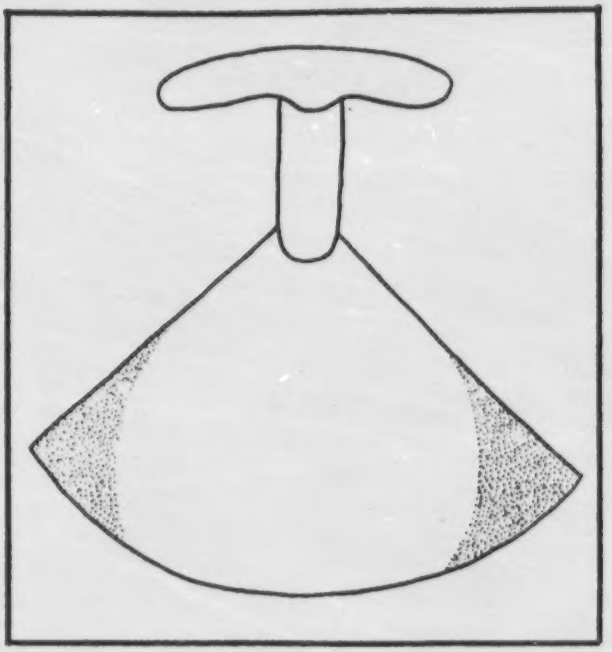
The only places in the north where white men took up permanent residence were the forts of the Hudson's Bay Company. These forts extended around Hudson Bay and across the top of the Arctic. The Hudson's Bay Company traded for furs with the Inuit, and gave them in return guns, European foods and clothing.

This began to change the Inuit's traditional life style. The Inuit began to rely on guns for hunting rather than the old weapons. Many Inuit forgot how to make the complicated harpoons, spears and bows. For guns, they needed ammunition and this cost money. If for some reason the trader moved or would not give them credit at the store, or if the price of furs went down, then the Inuit starved because they could not afford the ammunition for their guns. Gradually, the Inuit became more and more bound to the stores and to trapping as the source of income to buy necessary supplies at the store.

This process still goes on today. Many Inuit still live on the land and support themselves by hunting. But some have forgotten how to hunt, or are unable to do so because much of the game has been killed.

The Inuit do not want to depend on others for their income. They would much rather be independent and self-supporting, as they were before the white men came. It is no longer possible for all of them to return living on the land.

Therefore, they hope that in the future more jobs will open up in the North: jobs which the Inuit can learn to do. Now, most companies hire their workers in the south and bring them to the north to work.



The ulu, used as a scraping tool by the Inuit.

The Inuit believe that these jobs should be filled by Inuit who already live in the North.

They also want to run their own government, and to have an education which is suited to the Inuit way of life. These things they feel they can do. They hope that they will be given a chance to make a good life for themselves and everyone else in the North; if they are allowed to follow an Inuit way.

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Contact with the White Men

Explorer Jacques Cartier meets Indians on one of his voyages to the new land.

Indians had their own societies with their own laws and customs before the coming of the white man. At first, the Europeans were not interested in the Indian societies, and left them alone. But gradually, they pushed the Indians off the land.

Eight or nine hundred years ago, the first meetings between Indians and Europeans took place. The Vikings, from Norway, tried to set up a colony in the new world, probably in the area we call the Maritimes.

Viking legends tell of the people they met — "small, ill-favoured men", as one legend says — whom they called *Skraelings*. These people were probably Micmac or Malecite Indians.

The Norse colony lasted only three years. The Vikings fought with the Indians, and were forced to abandon their settlements.

But the other Europeans were not far behind the Vikings. By the end of the 1400's, French fishermen were sailing to the Grand Banks. A French explorer brought some Indians back to France with him just after 1500.

The Indians had met many white men by the time Jacques Cartier made his first voyage to Canada in 1534. But Cartier didn't just fish and go away. He claimed the land for France. Neither Cartier nor the French government cared that the land belonged to the Indians.

p. 58 blank

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At first, the French were more interested in fishing than in living in the new land. The Indians rarely saw them, except when some fishermen came ashore to dry their fish before sailing home.

But after about a hundred years, beaver hats came into fashion in France. There were few beaver left in Europe, so the French turned to North America, where they were plentiful. Because the trade in beaver furs was so rich and important, the French decided to settle the new land so the fur trade could be protected.

Furs were to be the main business of France's new colony. The French encouraged the Indians to spend their winters trapping beaver. In the summer, the Indians brought the pelts to the French trading posts. There, they got European goods which made their lives easier — metal arrowheads, knives and axes, which were much better than the stone ones; metal kettles, which were sturdier than the pottery or bark containers. They also liked the French breads and cloth, which added colour and variety to their skin clothing.

There were never very many French people in the new colony. Many of the settlers moved back to France, after making money in the fur trade. But even if they did not settle the land, the French still believed it to be their own.

They believed that, once a group of Indians agreed to French rule, the rights to their land passed to France. The Indians thought they were signing peace treaties with the white men. But the French believed the Indians were giving up the right to their land.

The British, too were trading in Canada. In 1670, they formed the Hudson's Bay Company. It claimed huge amounts of land, in which only the Company could trade. But the Hudson's Bay Company was more interested in trade than settlement.

In 1760, though, things began to change. The British captured New France. The Indians remained undisturbed for about fifteen years. But in 1776, the American colonies rebelled.

When the colonists who supported Britain in the revolution knew the

The fur trade was very important to New France. Here, Indians trade their furs for French manufactured goods.

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fight was lost, they often came to Canada. Canada was a British colony. The government encouraged more settlers to come. It provided them with free land.

By 1816, Britain had finished its war with Napoleon, and had nothing to do with the thousands of soldiers who had fought in the wars. It gave them free land in Canada, and many accepted eagerly. So thousands more people came to live in Canada.

Most of these new settlers were not interested in the fur trade. They wanted to clear the land of its forests to make farms. They also wanted a clear title to their lands.

decided that something had to be done about them.

The solution, as far as the government was concerned, was to persuade the Indians to give up their rights to the land and to settle down on reserves. The government decided that it must "civilize" the Indians. It thought the Indians should give up their hunting and wandering ways, and become farmers instead. So the government began a policy of making treaties with the Indians. In the treaties, the Indians gave up their rights to the land in return for payments of various kinds, including equipment and animals to begin farming with,

The settlers were not interested in allowing the Indians to keep their way of life. Here, settlers are clearing the ground in an area that was once rich in game.

The Indians had no place in this scheme. They were not needed in the areas which were being opened up for farming. Furthermore, the Indians represented a barrier to progress. They still claimed to own much of the land which the settlers wanted to use. They insisted on using this land to carry out their old pursuits of hunting and fishing. The government

and for the guarantee of reserves which they could hold forever.

When the British came to Canada, they recognized that the Indians had a right to say that they owned the land, because they were there first. The Indians' right to the land was called "aboriginal title". The British felt they could not take the land away from the Indians until they

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had both made a treaty, and had given the Indians some kind of payment in return for the land. This was called "extinguishing" the Indians' aboriginal title.

The first treaty with the Indians was made in 1781. The last treaty was made in 1923. There were 483 treaties made, most of them for fairly small parcels of land. But in others, the Indians surrendered huge tracts, sometimes almost the size of an entire province.

The largest surrenders of land were through the "Numbered treaties", treaties one to eleven, which were made between 1871 and 1921. By these eleven treaties, the Indians surrendered most of the provinces of Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and part of the Northwest Territories and British Columbia. Here is a sample of a treaty, Treaty Number Four, which shows who the treaty was made with and what the promises were:

TREATY FOUR

September 15,1874. Made with the Cree, Salteaux and others.
Area given up: mainly southern Saskatchewan; 193,203 square kilometres.

Indian Promises

- To observe the treaty
- To maintain peace
- To not molest persons or property
- To assist in bringing Indian offenders to justice

Government Obligations

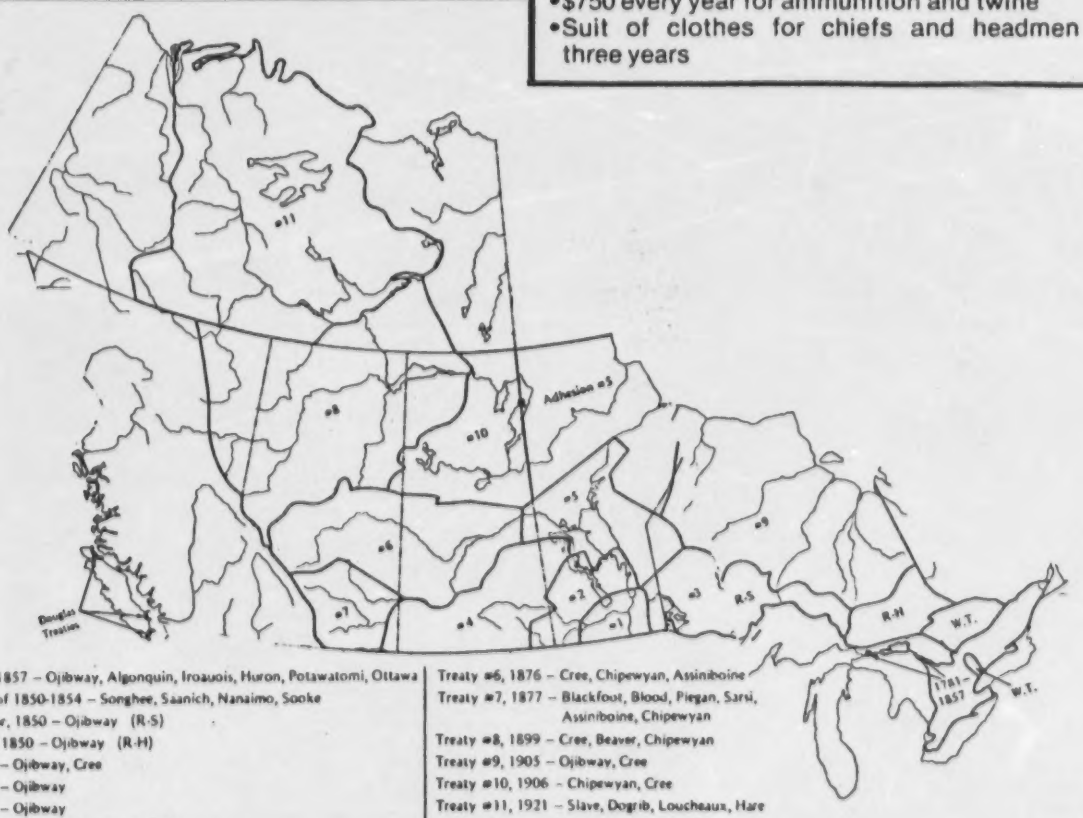
- To set aside reserves of 2.6 square kilometres per person, subject to government rights to deal with settlers on reserve lands
- To sell or rent lands on the reserves, so long as money for improvements or land is given
- To provide schools
- To give the Indians the right to hunt, trap or fish as long as they obeyed government laws
- To control liquor traffic

Treaty Presents

- Indians, $12; chiefs, $25; headmen, $15
- miscellaneous agricultural equipment, supplies, etc.
- flags and medals

Annuities (to be paid every year)

- Indians, $5; chiefs, $25; headmen, $15
- $750 every year for ammunition and twine
- Suit of clothes for chiefs and headmen every three years



Treaties of 1781-1857 – Ojibway, Algonquin, Iroquois, Huron, Potawatomi, Ottawa
Douglas Treaties of 1850-1854 – Songhee, Saanich, Nanaimo, Sooke
Robinson-Superior, 1850 – Ojibway (R-S)
Robinson-Huron, 1850 – Ojibway (R-H)
Treaty #1, 1871 – Ojibway, Cree
Treaty #2, 1871 – Ojibway
Treaty #3, 1873 – Ojibway
Treaty #4, 1874 – Cree, Ojibway, Assiniboine
Treaty #5, and Adhesions, 1875 – Ojibway, Cree
Treaty #6, 1876 – Cree, Chipewyan, Assiniboine
Treaty #7, 1877 – Blackfoot, Blood, Piegan, Sarsi, Assiniboine, Chipewyan
Treaty #8, 1899 – Cree, Beaver, Chipewyan
Treaty #9, 1905 – Ojibway, Cree
Treaty #10, 1906 – Chipewyan, Cree
Treaty #11, 1921 – Slave, Dogrib, Loucheaux, Hare
Williams Treaties of 1923 – Ojibway (W.T.)

Note: The ethnic groups are the main ones involved in the areas. In some cases one or two other groups, in small numbers, may have been involved. This is more likely in the western treaties than in Ontario.

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Despite all this treaty-making, there are still large areas of Canada which are not under treaty. Much of British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and the Atlantic Provinces were never surrendered by the Indians through a treaty. Today, this is causing much discussion. The Indians now claim they still have an interest in these lands. They want the government to negotiate with them settle their rights. They do not want to take money for the land, as the Indians did in the past. Rather, they want to have some say in how the land will be used now and in the future.

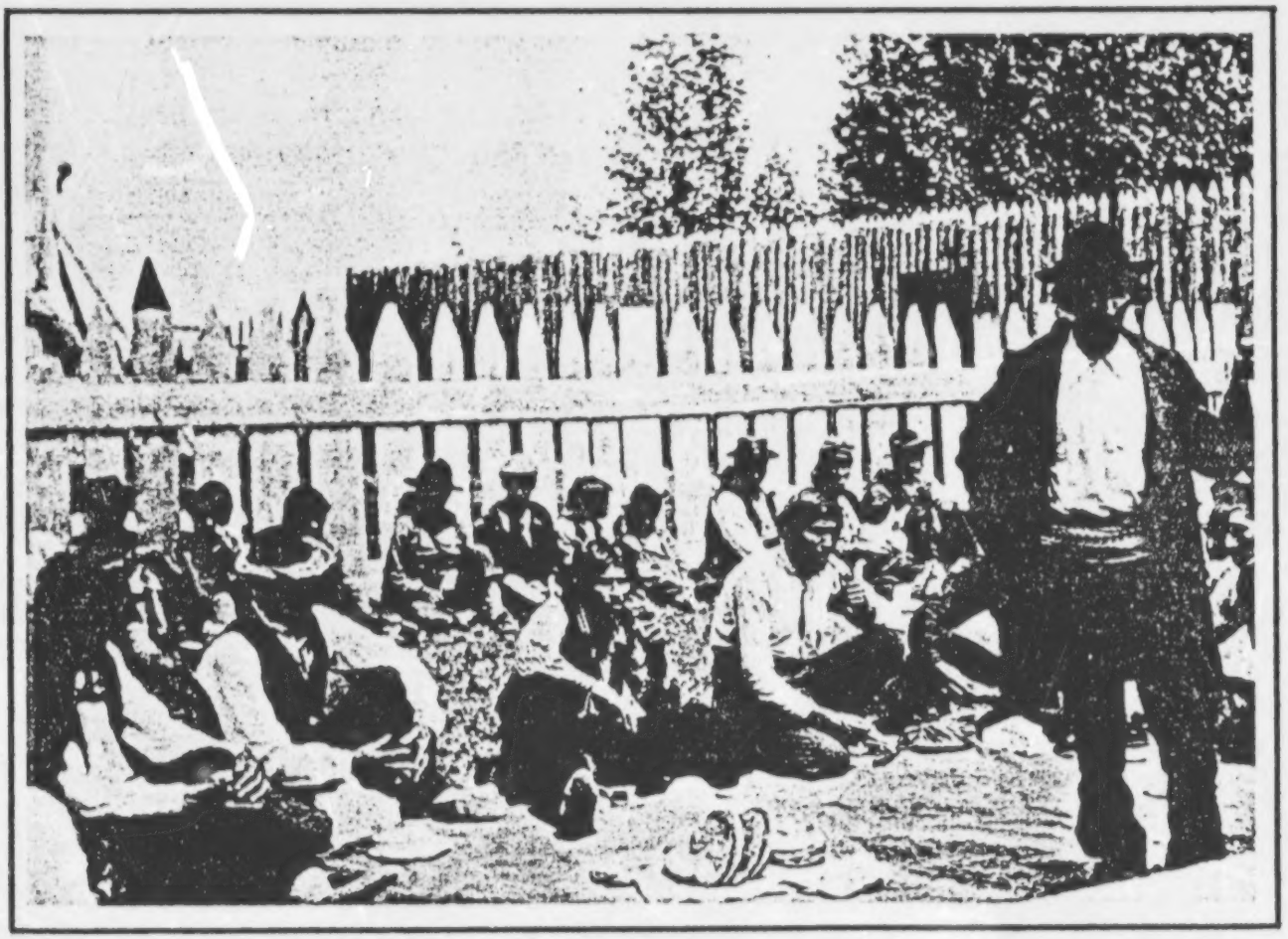
After the treaties were made, the Indians had to become used to a new way of life. The government expected them to settle down on their reserves and become farmers or ranchers.

At first, many Indians continued to follow their old way of life, travelling in search of the animals which provided their food. They only returned to their reserves at certain times of the year: in winter, or in the summer when treaty payments were made.

Gradually, the situation changed. The land around the reserves began to fill up with white settlers who cleared the land for farms and put up fences. Much of the game began to disappear as the environment changed. Without the animals, the Indians were forced to find new ways of making their livings.

Many tried to become farmers. The change was difficult to make, for they lost much of their treasured freedom to roam the open country.

There were many other changes.



Indians signed away their rights to their lands when they made treaties with the white men. This meant a big change in the Indian way of life.

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Before the white men came, the Indians had control over their own lives. They took care of feeding themselves; they ran their own government; they had their own methods of educating their children and their own religion.

There was no such thing as unemployment. When something needed doing, such as food gathering, they did it. If there was nothing important to do, then they relaxed. Perhaps they took the time to play games or sports, or to tell stories to the children.

When the white men came, all this changed. All the things which the Indians had handled before were now taken out of their hands and managed by the whites.

The white men told them that their religion was not good, and that they must convert to Christianity. The white men decided that the children must go to school, and often took them away from their parents to live in boarding schools for years at a time.

Government was no longer a matter to be decided on by the members of the tribe. Instead, the Indians were told that they must hold elections for the chief and the band council; but the chief and the band council did not have much real power.

The important decisions were made by the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa, and by the Indian agent who was appointed by the government. The determining of laws and the punishment of offenders were taken over by the police and the courts.

In many areas, the Indians were no longer able to or allowed to hunt and fish. Instead they were told that they must become farmers. When they chose not to or when the land on the reserve was too poor to farm the white men called them unemployed.

What were they to do? Many Indians changed and learned to live like the white men. Some stayed on the reserves and found work. Others moved to the cities where the jobs were. For those left on the reserves who could not find work, there was little to do. They were not allowed to follow their old ways, and they did not want the new ways. It was a hard choice to make.

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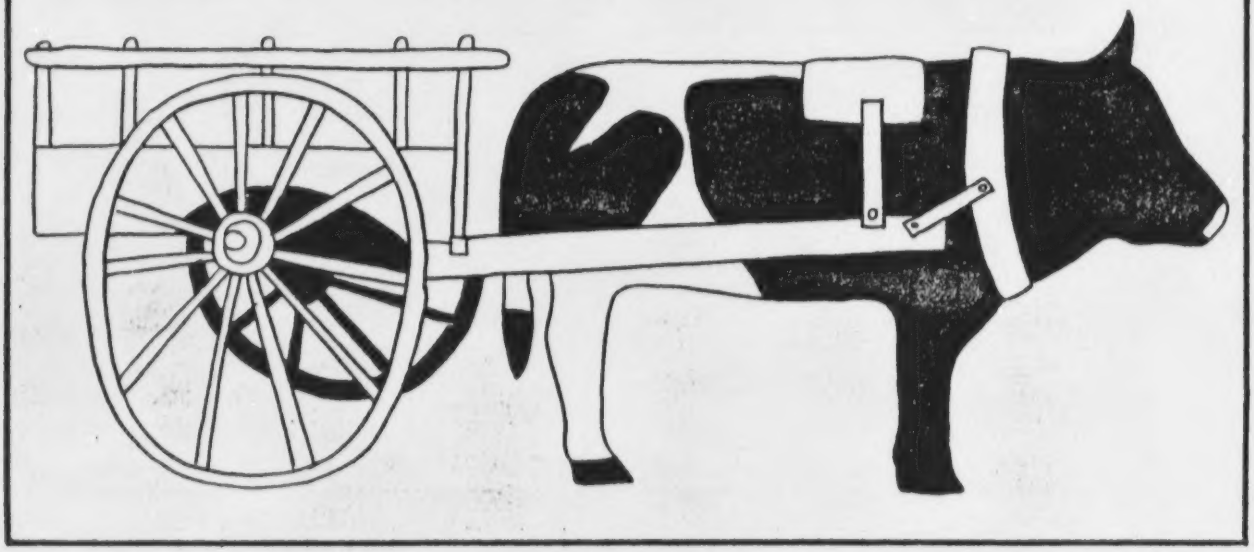
The Metis



The Red River cart was once the main form of transporting goods across the prairies. It was reliable and tough, but it sounded like " a thousand fingernails being drawn across a thousand panes of glass."

There were no Metis in Canada before the coming of the white men. They were not a separate tribe of Indians. But today, we call all people who are descendents of both Indians and Europeans "Metis."

Europeans often married Indians when they moved to North America. Almost all of the Europeans who settled here were men. So the first Metis children often had European fathers and Indian mothers.

The largest number of Metis lived in the west of Canada, on the Prairies. For a time, it seemed as though the Metis would found a new state in the west — a province whose government and customs were based on the Metis way of life. This was never to be, but the western Metis still combined some of the best of Indian and European ways of life.

For the most part, the Metis were the children of the fur trade. Their fathers usually worked for one of the fur trading companies. The fathers brought their Indian wives to live with them near the fur trading posts. There, they raised their children.

When they grew up, the children, too, entered the fur trade. Some became hunters and trappers; others became canoemen and packers, or clerks and interpreters in the forts. For many years, the Metis formed the backbone of the fur trade, providing both the labour and the skills to keep it going.

Gradually, as the numbers of the Metis grew, they began to develop a way of life which combined both the European and the Indian. This unique culture appeared in everything, from manners of dress to entertainment.

In dress, for instance, the Europeans wore layers of heavy woolen clothing, often so thick they had trouble moving. The Indians dressed in straight, flowing robes of leather, wrapping blankets around themselves for warmth. The Metis used both the leather of the Indian clothing and the tailoring of the European. They developed leatherwork into a superb craft — perhaps, even an art. To decorate their clothes, they used the glass beads sold by the trading

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companies. The results were so beautiful that the beadwork was soon adopted by the Indian women, as well.

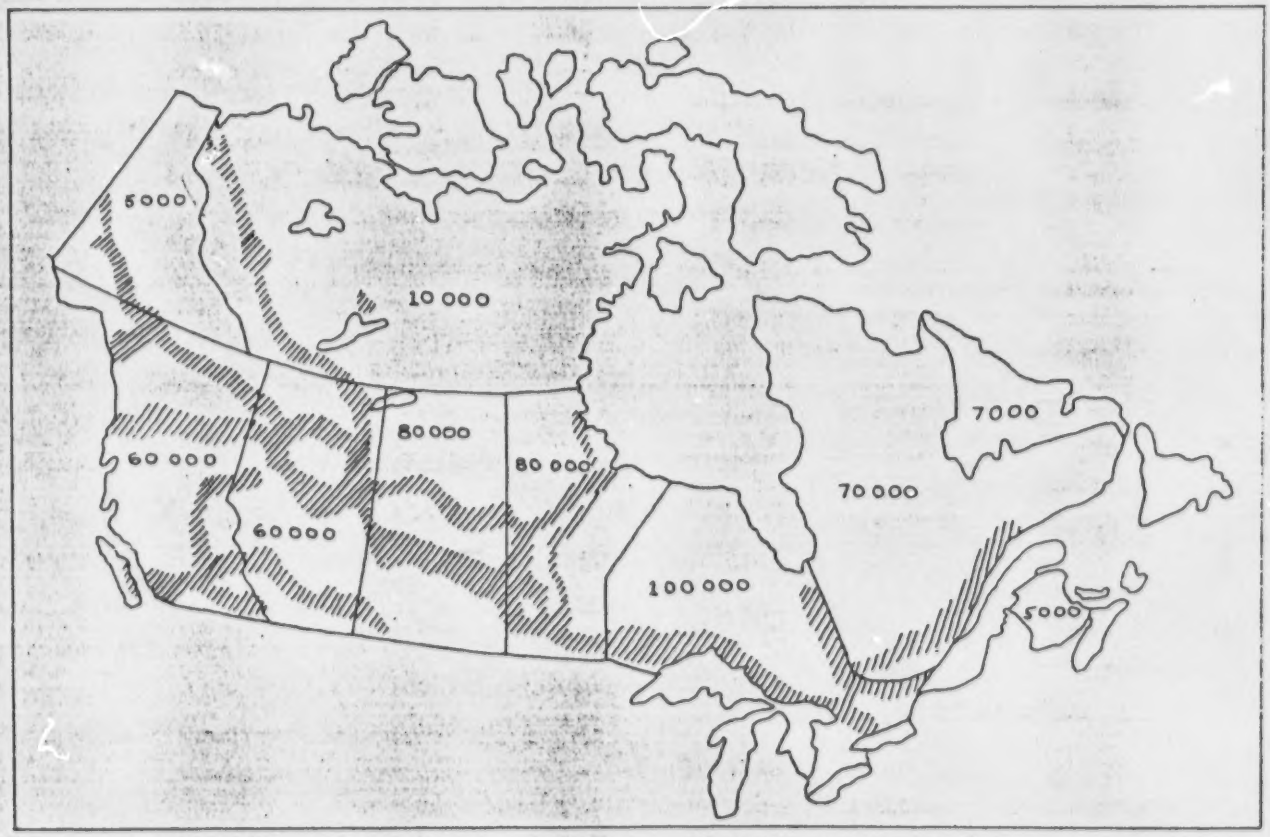
In dancing, the Metis combined the intricate footwork of the Indians with the Scottish dance forms. From their mothers, they knew the dances of the Indians; from their fathers, the reels and square dances of Scotland. Out of these, they devloped their own dance, which was called the Red River Jig.

For music, they used a fiddle, which was a favorite of the Scots. Lacking the money to buy imported European fiddles, the Metis learned to make their own from maple wood and birchbark.

Even the languages of the dances were mixed. For example, in the directions shouted by the callers to the dancers, "à la maine gauche" became "à la main left." Today, this call can still be heard in square dances, as "allemande left."

Metis dances often lasted for several days. The custom still survives today. Here is a description of a modern dance.

> Everyone would assemble at a particular home where all the furniture was removed and piled outside. The chairs and a small table were kept. The table served as the liquor bar and food stand. The only other piece of furniture kept was the stove. In summer this also would be removed. The preliminaries done, the dancing would commence with the men doing the toe-tapping (jigging). The women would then follow. Since many Metis, who attended such dances were fiddle players, the dancing would often times continue for days on end or at least until liquor, food, and energy were all exhausted. (Sealey. *The Metis.* p. 57.)



The map shows the major population belts of Metis and non-status Indians in Canada.

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Another favorite sport of the Metis was horse-racing. Horses were often seen racing through the settlements, either ridden by daring young men or harnessed to gaily decorated carrioles. A love of fast horses was no doubt inherited by the Metis from the Plains Indians, many of whom kept large herds of horses and especially prized the swift buffalo-runners.

The economy of the Metis combined both European and Indian practices. Like the Europeans, many Metis settled on small farms where they grew vegetables and small plots of grain, and tended some livestock. However, every summer they left their farms and hunted the buffalo herds like their Indian relatives.

Hunting the buffalo became one of the economic mainstays of the Metis community. The Metis built it into a major business enterprise, selling the products of the buffalo hunt to the fur trading companies. Pemmican, made from buffalo meat, kept the trader alive in many isolated fur posts, as well as the trapper on the trapline. Buffalo pemmican kept for years, and although it was tasteless, it was nutritious and compact. One half kilogram of pemmican was the equivalent of two kilograms of fresh meat. Although other animals were available, such as deer, elk, moose and caribou, there were not enough of them to meet the needs of the fur trade.

Farming and hunting buffalo were two major sources of income for those Metis who were not directly employed by the fur companies. A third major source of income for the Metis was hauling goods in their Red River carts. These carts were uniquely suited for use on the flat open prairies.

The Red River cart was a modification of the iron and wood carts used in Quebec. However, instead of iron wheels, the carts had wooden wheels made of one solid piece of wood sawed from a tree trunk. The cart was made entirely of wood, with the pieces bound together with rawhide. If a breakdown occured, a nearby tree supplied the material for repairs. When a river barred the way, the wheels were simply taken off and attached to the bottom of the cart. Then the whole was floated across like a raft.

The carts had just one drawback. The noise they made was terrible. Early travellers described it as "hellish", "unearthly", "horrifying", "as if a thousand fingernails were drawn across a thousand panes of glass". One Indian legend said that the disappearance of the buffalo was due to their need to flee the noise made by the carts. The reason the carts made so much

The distinctive Metis style of dress.

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noise was that the wheels could not be greased. If they were, the dust would mix with the grease and cement the wheels to the axle. The drivers and their animals just had to get used to the shriek of grinding wood. They did, and the carts became the foundation of land transport in the west.

Soon a series of cart trails crossed the prairies, linking the settlements which were gradually springing up. To a large extent, our modern highways are built on the old cart trails of the Metis freighters. The carts could carry much heavier loads than canoes or men could. They were the key to opening up the west for commerce. Without them the fur trade could not have existed.

Hunting, farming, freighting and working for the fur companies formed the basis of the Metis way of life until 1825. After 1825, the Metis way of life began to change. The cause of the change was the joining together of the fur companies.

In the early nineteenth century, two fur companies were active in the west: the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company. Competition had grown increasingly fierce between these two companies, sometimes amounting almost to full-scale war. In 1821, the two companies decided to bury their differences and merge into one company, to be called the Hudson's Bay Company. When this happened, many of the Metis employed by the fur companies were thrown out of work.

Almost every rich fur or pemmican area had two posts, one for each company. After amalgamation, only one post was needed in each area. This meant that something had to be done about the extra employees.

The Hudson's Bay Company decided that its former employees should become farmers, and move to the Company's settlement at Red River in southern Manitoba. The Company agreed to provide churches and schools, grants of land for farms and assistance with basic necessities such as clothing, tools, seeds and ammunition. Between 1821 and 1825, many Metis families moved to Red River.

Red River was to become the homeland of a strong and united Metis people. At Red River, living together and facing their problems together, the Metis began to develop a sense of themselves as an economic and political community.

Education and the Catholic Church were important influences on the Metis at this time. When the Metis had been scattered across the prairies, it had been difficult to set up schools to educate their children. When the Metis settled at Red River, a number of schools were set up which their children began to attend. These schools became the training ground for Metis priests, teachers, traders, poets and scholars. The schools were operated by the Catholic Church, which also sent missionaries and priests to Red River to convert the Metis. Before the missionaries came, many of the Metis had followed the Indian religion of their mothers. At Red River, many converted to Christianity. The Catholic Church provided education and leadership. It also did its best to encourage the Metis to settle into a farming life.

New Metis communities began to spread along the rivers. In the communities the Metis began to develop their own laws and government. They began to emerge as a strong and united people. Their strength was soon to be tested in what today is called the first "Riel Rebellion".

In 1868, the Hudson's Bay Company agreed to sell its land in the Northwest to the newly-formed Government of Canada. This land included the Red River area where the Metis were living. After the sale, the government sent surveyors to Red River to map out the land. The Metis were not informed of the surveyors' purpose. They thought that their lands were going to be taken away from them. No one had consulted them in the sale, and they were afraid that under the new government they

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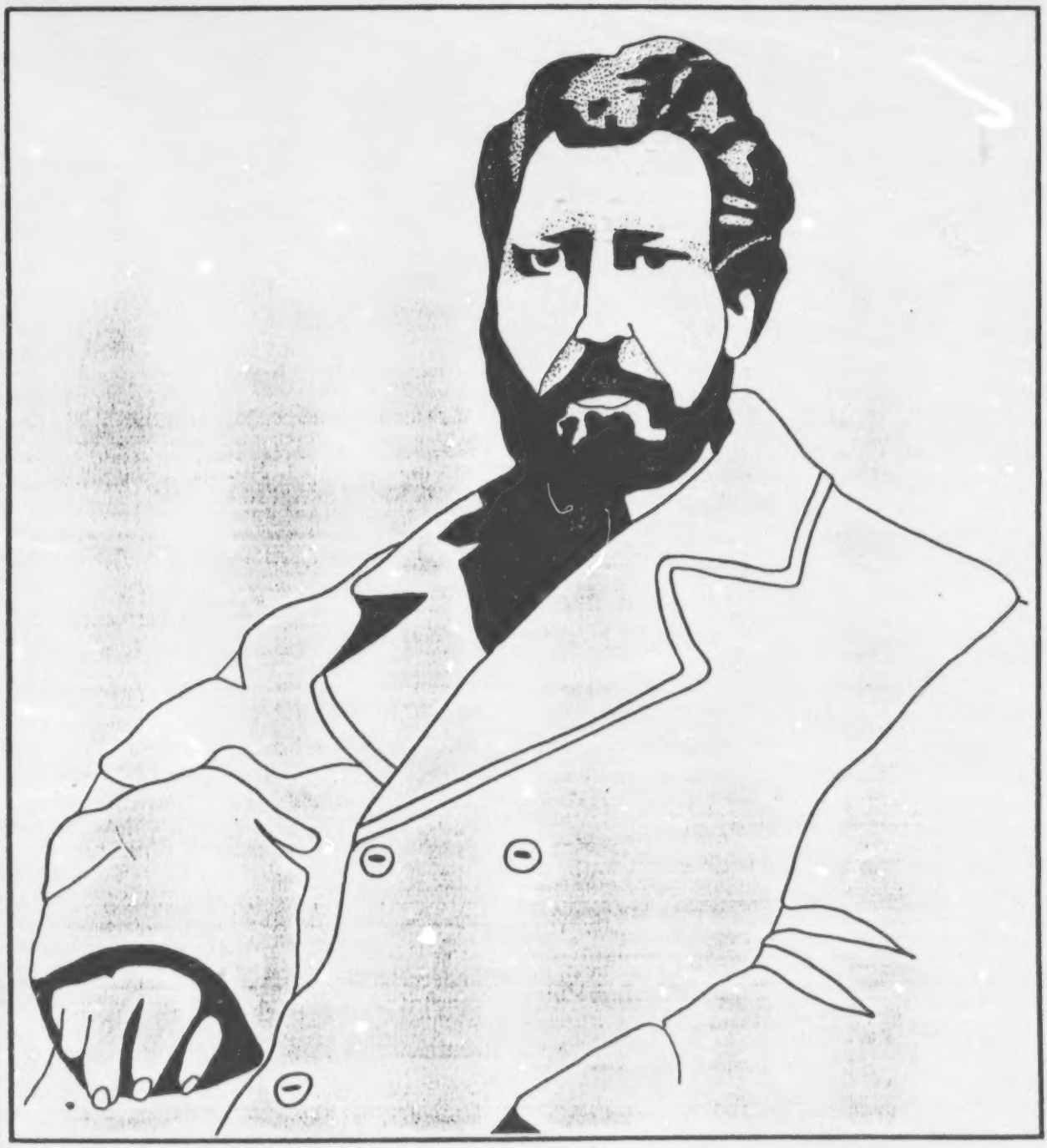

Metis leader Louis Riel, who led two rebellions for the cause of Metis rights.

would lose their rights, their way of life and their land.

They decided to take action to inform the Government of Canada of their fears. On December 10, they set up a provisional government in Red River, headed by Louis Riel, a Metis. The provisional government drew up a list of rights which they wanted the Canadian Government to guarantee.

Today the Metis demands sound very moderate. They wanted to have an elected legislature to control their own affairs, and the right to elect representatives

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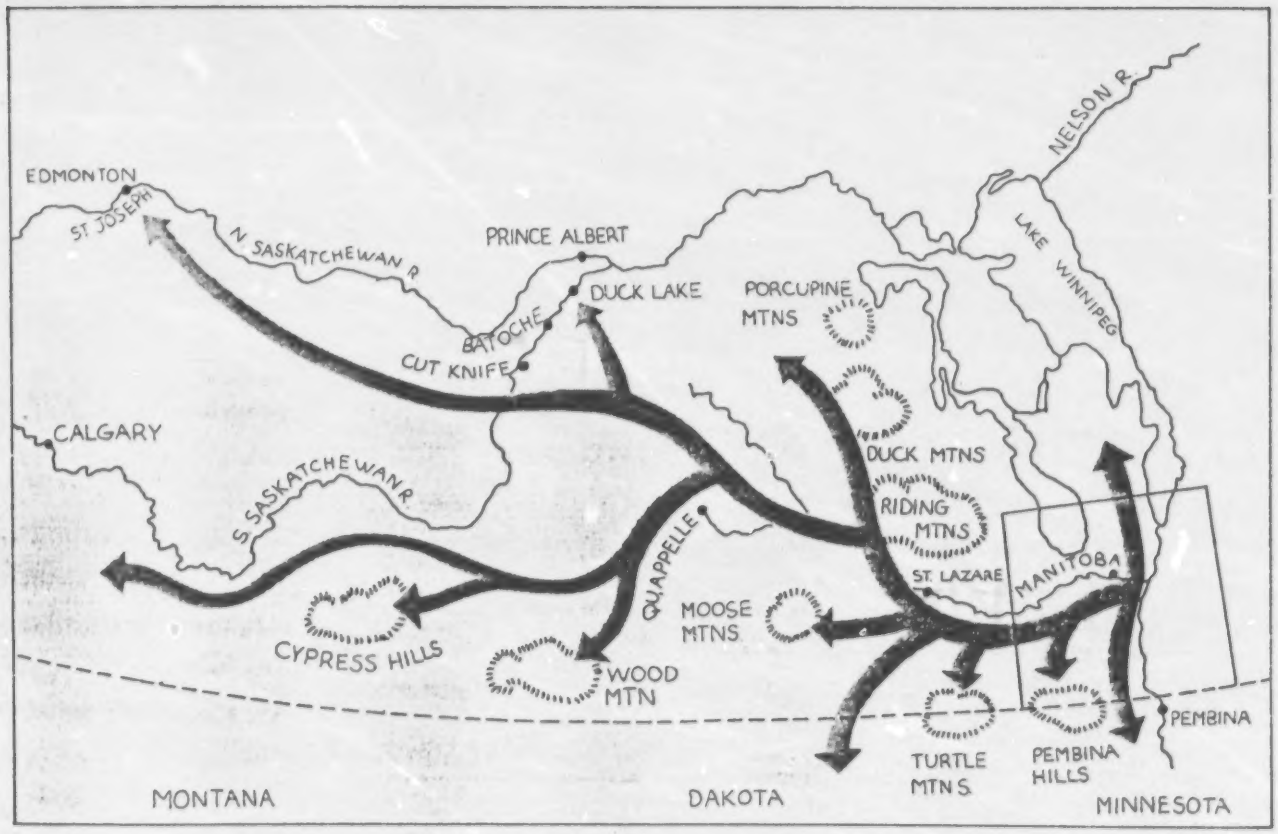

As the settlers moved in, taking the land, the Metis were forced to move. This map shows their migration between 1870 and 1880.

to send to the Canadian Parliament. They wanted to have churches and schools. They wanted both French and English to be official languages in the courts and legislatures, and they wanted the confirmation of all existing "customs, privileges and usages". These demands show that the Metis were concerned about preserving their culture, and that they wanted to be admitted to Confederation as voting members rather than as second-class citizens with few rights.

Up to this point, the "rebellion" had been fairly quiet. However, Riel made one mistake, which was to create difficulties for him and for the Metis for years to come. The Metis government was holding several prisoners, among them a man called Thomas Scott. Scott was an Orangeman, and the Orangemen were a group which hated Catholics. Most Metis were Catholic. Scott repeatedly insulted the Metis and threatened them with violent reprisals because of the action they had taken. The Metis government set up a court martial for Scott and found him guilty of insubordination and disloyalty. On March 4, 1870, he was executed.

Scott's execution was a mistake. In Red River, it shook the faith of many of Riel's supporters. In Ontario, where there were many Orangemen, it led to violent protests against the French Catholic Metis. The Government of Canada was persuaded to pass the Manitoba Act, which contained most of the demands of the Metis List of Rights. It was unable to protect Riel. Riel was exiled from Canada.

The Riel Rebellion had not been in vain. It forced the government to listen to the protests of the Metis, which it had tried to ignore. The differences between the Metis and the rest of Canada were reconciled. The Metis agreed to accept union with Canada on terms which protected their culture and identity. However, the Rebellion

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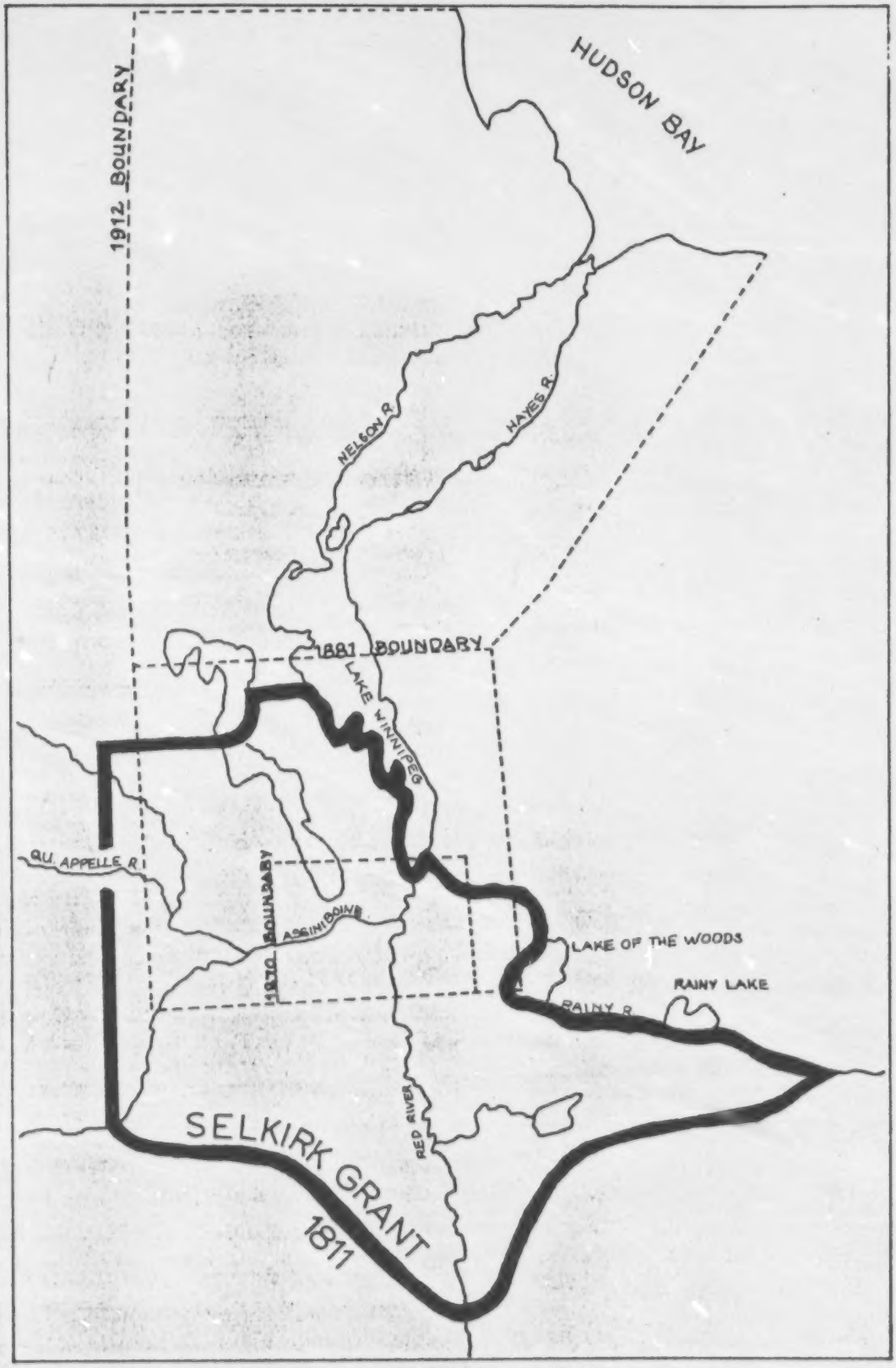

The Selkirk Grant to the Metis, and the extensions of the area granted.

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also led to anti-French and anti-Catholic hatred which were soon to become a problem.

With the establishment of the new province of Manitoba and the building of a railroad to the west, there was a flood of immigration into Red River. Often the Metis' rights to their land were not protected. When they returned from a summer of hunting the buffalo, many Metis found eastern farmers squatting on their land and claiming it for themselves. The easterners refused to give the land back to the Metis. The Metis were also unhappy because the buffalo were moving to the west, away from the new villages and towns. Without the buffalo, the Metis could no longer follow their old life-style of mixed farming and buffalo hunting. Some Metis decided to become full-time farmers. Many others decided to leave Red River and follow the buffalo further west. They hoped that in the western prairies, their lands would be safe and they could follow their old way of life.

The Metis were no longer liked in Manitoba. The new settlers disliked them, because they were Catholic and French and part Indian. They also disliked the Metis because of the rebellion. They began to persecute the Metis, and a number were beaten or killed. The government would not take any action against the settlers, because more trials would create unrest. Many of the Metis feared for their lives, and left the province.

They moved west. Some moved only a short distance, and built settlements in Manitoba. Others spread out through Saskatchewan and Alberta.

The Metis needed their own land. The government realized this, and set aside certain townships for Metis settlement. But the government usually made the problems of the Metis worse when it tried to solve them. Several times, the government granted land to the Metis, but changed its mind and gave it to someone else. The Metis could never be sure the government wouldn't let them have the land one year, and take it away the next. Often, when a Metis person went to claim his land, he found someone else on it already.

Most Metis gave up trying to get their land. They sold the land rights to speculators for far less money than it was worth.

The government kept ignoring the Metis' reguests for their land. In the 1880's, there was a flood of immigration into western Canada, and new settlers were taking still more of the Metis lands.

The Metis began to think again of their old leader, Louis Riel, who had led them to partial victory in their last battle with the government. Louis Riel was living in the United States. He had become an American citizen, and was fighting for Metis rights in Montana. When the Canadian Metis sent a delegation, led by Gabriel Dumont, to ask him to return to Canada to help his people, he agreed.

The first thing that Riel did was to draw up a petition to send to Ottawa. In it, he asked for four things: free title to the land presently occupied by the Metis; provincial status for the Districts of Saskatchewan, Assiniboia and Alberta; the setting up of laws to encourage the agricultural settlement of the nomadic Indians and Metis; and more liberal treatment of Indians.

The government promised only to conduct a census of the Metis people, which was not a solution to their problems. Louis Riel set up a provisional government. The situation among the Metis became even worse. The buffalo were disappearing and the people were starving. The government sent a group of soldiers to Duck Lake to arrest Riel. Led by Gabriel Dumont, the Metis went into battle with the soldiers and won. Duck Lake was the first of a series of battles, as the Metis fought to preserve their new government. The Metis were joined in the fighting by some of the Indian tribes, who were also unhappy. Eventually the Metis were defeated.

In July, 1885, Riel was charged

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with treason and went to trial. The trial created an uproar throughout Canada, and even in Britain and France. Was Riel a madman and a traitor, or was he a man with a mission and a vision for his people's future? Finally Riel was found guilty and sentenced to death. On November 16, 1885, Riel was hanged, despite last-minute attempts by his people to free him from prison.

Riel's death marked the end of the Metis nation. Many Metis fled to the few areas of wilderness that sill remained. Others lived in slums on the edge of cities and towns. The government, between 1885 and 1921, signed treaties with the Indians and Metis to extinguish their future rights to the land. The Indians were offered reserves. The Metis were offered a choice; they could take either land or script worth $160-$240. Many Metis, remembering how they had been unable to keep the land promised to them before, chose to take the money scrip. When this money was gone, the Metis had nothing. A few managed to become successful farmers or businessmen, but most had very little.

Today there are about 750,000 Metis living in Canada. Many still follow the same way of life as their Indian relatives, living by hunting, trapping and fishing. Others live on the outskirts of towns and cities, or make an attempt to farm on land which is not their own. They share many of the same problems that Indians face in Canada. They tend to have little education; 70% speak a language other than English; they often look like Indians and are discriminated against by other people. Unlike the Indians, they do not have a Department of Indian Affairs to look after their interests, nor do they have protected reserve land to call their home. They do not share in the benefits of the treaties, such as special hunting and fishing rights or free education and medical care.

Today the Metis are actively seeking to improve their situation. They are taking advantage of government programs to provide education, job training and economic development in the distant northern communities in which Metis live. In their efforts, they are helped by their organizations. Metis organizations in almost every province provide leadership and assistance in raising the standard of living of their people. At this point, many Metis have little choice but to integrate themselves into Canadian society. They only hope to do so while keeping as much of their culture as possible. What they are asking for is only as much as most Canadians already have. A poem by a Metis student expresses these feelings.

> And now at the present
> We have a lot of voice
> So now, friends and brothers
> Let us all rejoice
> Because we're Metis.
>
> ... We are Indian, we are white
> We are rejected by them both
> Although we are so lost between
> We continue in our growth
> As a Metis.
>
> by Joel Anderson, 10 years old
> Valley River, Manitoba

(Taken from *Questions and Answers concerning the Metis*. p. 13.)

Metis — Sources

Howard, Joseph. *Strange Empire*. Toronto: 1974.

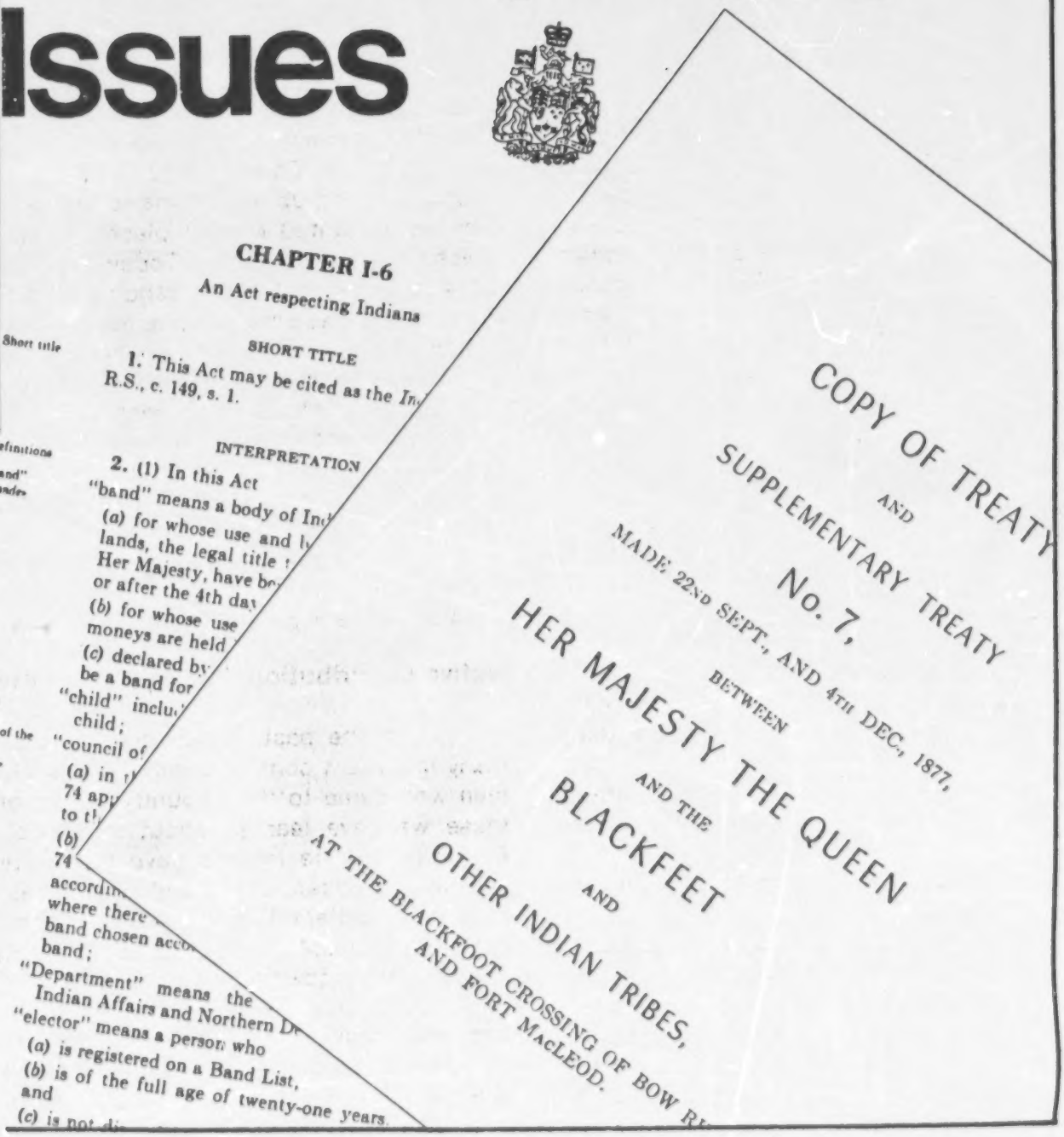
Sealey, Bruce (ed.) *Questions and Answers Concerning the Metis*. Winnipeg: 1973.

Sealey, Bruce and Antoine S. Lussier. *The Metis: Canada's Forgotten People*. Winnipeg: 1975.

Books Recommended for Children

the two Sealey books above

Contemporary Issues



CHAPTER I-6

An Act respecting Indians

Short title

SHORT TITLE

1. This Act may be cited as the *In*
R.S., c. 149, s. 1.

Definitions
"band"
«bande»

INTERPRETATION

2. (1) In this Act
"band" means a body of *In*
(*a*) for whose use and *b*
lands, the legal title
Her Majesty, have be
or after the 4th day
(*b*) for whose use
moneys are held
(*c*) declared by
be a band for
"child" «enfant»
"child" includ
child;
"council of the band" «conseil»
"council of
(*a*) in t
74 apu
to t
(*b*)
74
accordi
where there
band chosen acco
band;
"Department" «Ministère»
"Department" means the
Indian Affairs and Northern D
"elector" «électeur»
"elector" means a person who
(*a*) is registered on a Band List,
(*b*) is of the full age of twenty-one years
and
(*c*) is not di

COPY OF TREATY
AND
SUPPLEMENTARY TREATY
No. 7,
MADE 22ND SEPT., AND 4TH DEC., 1877,
BETWEEN
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
AND THE
BLACKFEET
AND
OTHER INDIAN TRIBES,
AT THE BLACKFOOT CROSSING OF BOW RI
AND FORT MacLEOD.

Let's suppose for a minute that you are a Native person living in Canada.

You might be a status Indian. That means you are a direct descendent of Indian ancestors. And because of that, the Department of Indian Affairs is very important to you.

We are all used to having many

p. 74 blank

different government departments provide us with the things we need. Some departments pave roads; others build schools; others look after hospitals and health care; others make sure our economy works.

For status Indians, though, the Department of Indian Affairs is responsible for almost everything. So you would be very concerned about the Department of Indian Affairs if you were a status Indian.

When the Europeans took over Indian land, they signed treaties, which gave reserves to the Indians. If you were one of the people who was covered under the treaties, you became a "Status Indian." And your children, and all their descendents, became status Indians, too. And if you are a status Indian, you are governed by the Indian Act, which says the Department of Indian Affairs is supposed to look after your needs.

If you were a status Indian, you would probably be a member of a tribe, and of a band. Instead of saying "I am Scottish," or "I am Italian," or "I am Jamaican," you would say "I am Cree," or "I am Ojibwa."

There would be many things of importance to you if you were a status Indian — things that would probably be different, in some ways, from the things that are important to you. Say you were a Metis, or an Inuk (whom we have already read about). Many of the same things would be important to you, too.

We are going to learn about a few of these things.

But now that you have read of the Indians, and how they lived before the white men came, wouldn't it be interesting to compare the way the Indians lived then from the way they do now?

Their way of life was much different from ours, then. Now, some is different, some is the same.

And the best person to tell you all about that would be an Indian friend.

But here are some of the things which concern Native people today.

Life on the Reserves

Many Native people in Canada live on "reserves".* Reserves are sections of land set aside for the use of Native people. No one may hunt, fish or live on an Indian reserve unless he is a member of the band or has their permission to do so. Most reserves were given to the bands a long time ago, when the bands made a treaty with the government giving up their rights to the part of Canada they lived in. In return for giving up their rights to this land, they were granted smaller pieces of land which were called reserves. Today, there are 2,274 reserves in Canada, ranging in size from reserves as small as one half hectare to tracts as large as 1300 square kilometres.

Most Native people in Canada feel very strongly about their reserves, and would not want to give them up. Even if the people live away from the reserve in a city, they often go back to the reserve to visit. To the people of the reserve, the reserve is a place they can call their home — an island of Indian life in the middle of a sea of European culture.

Native Contributions to White Society

In the past, Indian people made many important contributions to the white men who came to their country. Some of these we have learned about in school. For example, the Indians gave the white men the toboggan, canoe and snowshoes, as well as different foods such as corn, beans and squash. They also gave us the names of many towns, provinces, lakes and rivers in Canada. However, the contributions that Indians can made to Canada are by no means ended. They still have a great deal to give, and we have a great deal to learn from them.

Many Indian people, especially in

* In Canada, the land set aside for Indians is called a reserve. Only in the United States are they called reservations.

the North, still hunt, fish and trap for their living. Because they depend on the land and its animals, they know a lot about both. Scientists who take the trouble to ask, often find Indian people can teach them a great deal about the environment.

Because they live so close to the land, Indian people care very much about what happens to it. They are afraid that building mines, roads and pipelines, will have a bad effect on the land and the animals. Now they are trying to tell the rest of Canada what these bad effects are. They are asking that Canadians think again and plan carefully before building in the North. The Indian people are taking a role as defenders of the environment. This may be one of their most important contributions to Canadian society.

There are many other contributions that Indian people can make to Canadian society. They are members of very old and unique cultures. As long as they continue to survive, they can enrich Canadian life by their ability to draw on their culture for inspiration. For example, Indian artists, sculptors, playwrights and craftspeople create many beautiful works which draw both on past and present Native life.

Native people value their way of life because it is their own. In many ways, they live like other Canadians. They shop at stores, drive cars, eat in restaurants and go to movies. Their children attend schools. But in other ways they are different, and they want to preserve those differences.

As George Manuel, leader of the National Indian Brotherhood, wrote, in *the Fourth World;*

> So many of the Indian men of my generation have said ... "My father told me to be white. When he was on his deathbed, forty years later, he said, 'My son, I made a mistake. You raise your children and your grandchildren as Indians.' " (p. 68)

Art is one area in which Native people are making important contributions to Canadian society.

There are many problems facing Indian people in Canada today, but we should also remember that there are many positive features to Indian life. Indian people want to find a way of resolving the problems without sacrificing any of the good things about their way of life.

Who are Native People?

There are probably more than a million people in Canada who are at least partly Native. This is almost 1/20 of the whole population of Canada. It is likely that Native people will become an even larger part of the Canadian population in the future. Their birth rate is 2 1/2 times that of other Canadians. Native people are a much larger and more significant part of the Canadian population than many people realize.

There are three groups of people who are of Native ancestry. The first group is called *Status* Indians. Status Indians are the people usually referred to as Indians in government figures and statistics. There are about 300,000 status Indians in Canada. They are members of 565 different bands, occupying 2,274 reserves. About 70% of

Who Are Native People?

Credits
Top - Inuit Today
Left - Defeathering the Indian
Above - DIAND

status Indians actually live on reserves. About half of the registered Indians in Canada made no treaties with the government, and therefore do not have their own reserves.

The second group of Native people in Canada are the Metis and non-status Indians. There are about three-quarters of a million people in this group. Metis are people with one or more parents or grandparents who were Indian. When the treaties were made and the Indians were being registered, the Metis were not counted as Indians. They never became registered Indians, although sometimes the treaties made provision for them. Some treaties provided land or money for the Metis in recognition of their partial Indian ancestry.

Non-status Indians are people whose families were once status Indians. Either they themselves, or their parents or grandparents gave up or lost their Indian status. There are several reasons why this might have happened. Before 1950, status Indians could not vote, borrow money easily or run businesses, because of the Indian Act. Those who wanted the rights that other citizens have were obliged to give up their Indian status. Indian women and their children may have lost their treaty status by marrying non-Indian men.

Some Metis and non-status Indians live on reserves, with the permission of the band council. Others may live in communities where the people are registered Indians who do not have a reserve. Many live in the towns and cities.

Many Metis and non-status Indians have the same needs and desires as status Indians. They wish to preserve their Indian cultural heritage, and to continue living as Indians. Many speak only Native languages. However, the government does not make the same provisions for these people that it does for status Indians. Often there are special funds available to help status Indians, which Metis and non-status Indians cannot claim. For example, status Indians can get money to go to University from the Department of Indian Affairs. This money is not available to other people who may also have need of it. Thus, although Metis and non-status Indians have many of the same needs and desires as status Indians, they have fewer rights and privileges available to them.

The third group of Native people are the Inuit or Eskimo. There are about 18,500 Inuit in Canada today. They live mainly in the areas of Canada north of the treeline. The Inuit never signed treaties with the government of Canada, but they were registered by the government and have numbers. The government has recognized that they are "Indians" within the meaning of the British North American Act. This means that they have the right to many of the same special services in health, education, welfare and other areas that Indians may call upon. Today, the Inuit are becoming more and more active in demanding these rights, and asking for help to help themselves.

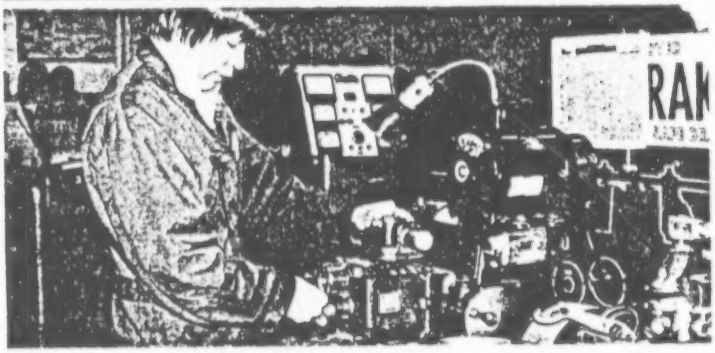
Native People and Poverty

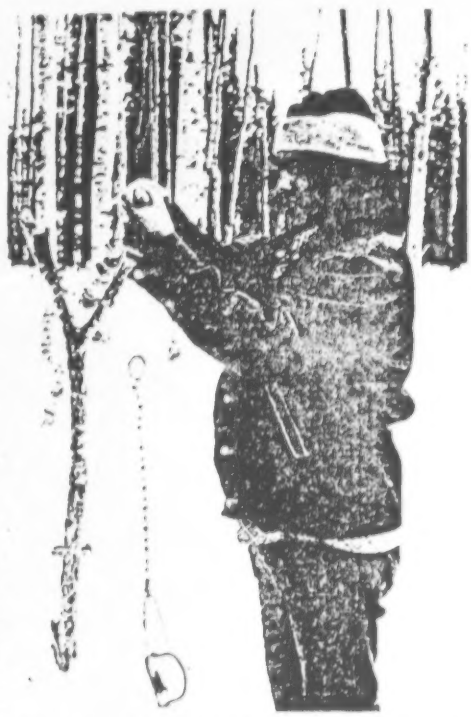
Some Native people are well-off, just as some non-Native people are. Take the people of Caughnawaga, a reserve near Montreal, as an example. The average income at Caughnawaga is high, because many of the men work on high steel construction, which is a very well-paid job. On other reserves with industries located nearby, the people are also well-off. However, most of the Native people in Canada are very poor. The average income for Indians on reserves is under $2,000 a year. That figure includes people who make much more money. Many Indians earn as little as $600 or $700 a year. Ask your parents if they could support a family on that little money.

The Indians who have little money often live in very poor conditions. Many of their houses have no plumbing, electricity, telephones or other things which most

Canadians take for granted. Their food is often equally poor. Native people cannot afford to buy better food because it is expensive in the stores in many Indian communities. This happens because most Native communities are in the north or in isolated areas where the costs of shipping food are high. Where possible, Native families may try to solve the problem of expensive food by hunting, fishing and growing their own vegetables. But in many areas, the growing season is short, the game is scarce, and the lakes are polluted, making it impossible to eat the fish. Nevertheless, where they can, Native people try to live off the land.

The Indian people who live on reserves are often very poor. It is so hard to make a living on most reserves. The land on many reserves is not good for farming. The Indian people were usually given the land that the white settlers did not want. Thus, most Indians cannot make a living by farming, although the lucky few that have good land are able to.





Some Native people are working in cities, while others still live a traditional life. At right, for instance, a young man is setting traps much like his father, grandfather and great-grandfather would have done. At left, a young student trains to be a machinist.

For a long time, many Indians lived by hunting game and trapping animals for fur. This provided a good living. Since World War II, the price of furs has fallen, and the animals have become scarcer. Fewer people than before are able to hunt and trap for their income.

Other industries are possible for people who live on reserves. Fishing provides an income for some; gathering wild rice for others; and making traditional Indian crafts for still others. But for many there is just not enough work to provide jobs for all the people that need them. 53% of status Indians are unemployed during the year. On some reserves, as many as 95% of the people are unemployed for seven months of the year. Compare this to the figures on unemployment for the rest of Canada.

Even though it is hard to make a living, many Indians prefer the life on the reserves and do not want to leave. However, every year, a certain number decide to leave. They come to the cities and towns to find work. But still, it is hard for them to find jobs. In 1971, Indian unemployment in the cities was estimated to be 68%, even higher than it is on some reserves. There are several reasons why this happens. Many of the Indians who come to the city have little experience working at the kinds of jobs they are likely to find. Although they may be expert trappers or fishermen, this is not enough training to find them jobs. Often they do not have as much education as employers demand. Many do not speak

English well, especially if they come from the north where Native languages are still used.

Such people often have a great deal of difficulty finding work. The situation is better for younger people who have more education, for those who speak English and those who have experience working at skilled jobs. But even for these people, it is not easy.

Many Native people feel that they have only two choices. They can stay on their reserves, living as Native people, and accept poverty. Or they can come to the city to make a living, but in doing so lose a part of their Indian culture. In the future, they hope to have a third choice. They want to stay on their reserves, but be able to find work. For this reason, Native people have repeatedly asked the government to help finance economic development projects in Native communities. At the moment much of the money which the government spends on Indians is paid to white people for services to Indians, such as counselling, medical care, teaching, road maintenance and building houses. The Native people would prefer to have this money spent on setting up industries in Native communities, which would provide jobs and income for Native people. For example, if a band can get the money to buy a caterpillar tractor, it can then use this equipment for construction projects on the reserve, as well as renting it out, together with an operator, to companies off the reserve. This would provide money for the band as well as income for individual people.

Similar requests have been made by Native people who do not live on reserves, but who are also poor. They would prefer that money be spent on training them for jobs and helping them to develop their own industries, rather than on services which merely help them to get by. Native people do not like being poor, nor do they want to remain so. What they most want is a chance to help themselves.